



Community Process Modelling and Rural Community Development

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HJ Percey', written in a cursive style.

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Abstract

Community development (CD) has been demonstrated to effectively deliver sought-after benefits towards improved economic, social, physical and psychological wellbeing. CD in rural areas is thus an important response to the change pressures in rural communities. Millions of dollars are spent annually on rural community development (RCD) activities. Yet CD is complex with many interacting variables and these dynamic processes are particularly visible in rural communities. RCD can have unintended (positive and negative) consequences upon the interwoven dynamics of the fabric of rural communities, independent of whether or not project objectives are achieved. A greater theoretical understanding of these processes is needed to better manage RCD outcomes and side effects. Such theoretical understanding is currently lacking in CD literature.

The purpose of this study was to use a grounded theory approach to generate a theoretical understanding of how RCD implementation processes interact with and affect the fabric of a community. Open interviews with twenty participants across three different RCD projects and rural sites were the key data source, contextualised by observation and written documentation.

Based on differing aetiologies, the study identified three types of community associated with and including the rural community: feature, interest and cause based. It was found that a multiplicity of these communities acted as constituents of each rural community, being part of, yet separate to the rural community. In coexisting, they were constituted by and subject to boundary processes.

Literature describes such boundary processes in terms of differentiation and symbolic expression.

This study identified additional processes of agendas, alignment and non-alignment.

RCD involved establishing and managing a further cause based constituent community amongst existing constituent communities and within the rural community. RCD projects were subject to boundary processes in creating their community identity, as well as in their interaction with other communities whilst pursuing project objectives. The study found that the often conflated concepts

of community ownership and support were also distinct processes with different roles in RCD. How all these processes were managed affected both the rural community fabric and the success of projects.

The thesis develops a theoretical model which will contribute to understanding and managing community processes and RCD for theorists and practitioners alike. Due to sample limitations, further research is needed to establish the extent to which the model can be extrapolated to other settings.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Research orientation and motivation

This thesis explores the interaction of rural community development (RCD) implementation with the fabric of the rural community. It seeks to generate theoretical insights which can be used by those involved in RCD projects, to help navigate the complex dynamics of community. To this end, a grounded theory approach has been used to develop theory from the ground of people's spoken experience of RCD projects.

This chapter provides an orientation to the thesis and establishes the motivation for the research. It briefly acknowledges the complexity of the field and introduces an example of how the fabric of community can be affected. The community fabric is comprised of the complex interwoven dynamics of the current and historical happenings, people and relational processes, and their interaction with and within the community space. The chapter highlights that the impact of RCD projects is not only associated with the targeted goals, but also affects the community fabric in ways that are often neither anticipated nor acknowledged by funding administrators. Despite not necessarily being accounted for, these effects can be strongly felt by community members. Current literature relevant to RCD outlines the dynamic and relational nature of community and the role of meaning, identity and boundaries. The interaction of RCD processes and these community processes sets the scene of both the motivation and context for the research. The bounds of the study given the nature of community and RCD are then discussed before briefly outlining the research approach and methods. The chapter closes with an outline of the thesis structure and content.

1: 1. Research Background and Problem

RCD involves the implementation of community development activities within the rural context, where community processes are highly visible. Community development is widely used, affecting many people, yet it is also a complex arena of diverse disciplines, theory and practice, interconnecting within the experience of community. These multiple sources of complexity mean that the process of achieving the purposive change of project tasks and goals, creates crevice changes or 'side effects' upon the community fabric as this process interacts with community processes. Managing these unintended consequences requires an understanding of these interactions.

Community development has been demonstrated to effectively create positive change in responding to rural and regional development needs. For these reasons and from a social justice perspective, it is considered a best practice approach within government policy and planning and by practitioners and academics alike. RCD particularly increased in popularity in the last two decades as a response to managing the specific pressures of the changing rural environment. Every year millions of dollars are spent through government and non-government services using community development to improve health, social, physical, psychological and economic well-being in rural communities around the world. Research in the field is thus important in its potential for broad reaching impact.

Community development is an approach utilised within a broad range of disciplines including health, sociology, social work, community and applied psychology, arts and environment. Accordingly it involves a variety of theoretical orientations, philosophical underpinnings and activities. As a field there are different motivations, foci and jargon to navigate in gaining knowledge useful to project implementation. Further, people's experience of community is often mixed. It can be a positive experience as both a source of, and space for, the expression of meaning, identity and belonging. At the same time it can be a province of anxiety, tensions and conflict. The diverse practices of

community development interplay with this complexity in the community fabric and such community processes are highly visible in the rural environment.

The community fabric includes the varying purposes and perspectives of participants and thus the agendas of funders, practitioners and community members. A quandary for the practitioner is that even when a project or program is seen as successfully achieving funded objectives, there can be an unintended and even negative experience and impact for participants. From the researcher's personal experience of working in the field of RCD, it was apparent that there can be both positive and negative unintended impacts on the fabric of the community. For example, a project aiming to increase access to and understanding of Information Technology (IT) was embraced locally and the project setting became not only a learning space but a social space. The sharing of home grown produce together with people dropping by for 'a chat' became part of the interaction within the informal learning space. Strong local ownership led to high volunteer support and actions that instigated a range of IT activities based on community interest and locally expressed needs. The project's social aspect was significant in reducing social isolation while at the same time increasing engagement in learning activities. Thus, although the social activity was not intended within the funding goals, the high level of community ownership and support meant that the contractual targets were met, if not exceeded.

However, over a five year period the focus of the funder administration shifted from self-sustainability where community ownership and self-direction were encouraged, to a more narrow focus on training, with greater 'top-down' direction. The 'bottom-up' development of self-sustaining and broad ranging IT activities in response to community interest that initially underpinned the project, was now discouraged.

Although training was always an important aspect within the RCD, the move away from a bottom-up approach to the top-down redirection of the project disenfranchised many locals. There was local resistance to outside 'experts' determining the range of activities of their community organisation,

and detailing how community learning was to be done. Project reporting presented the number of courses and people receiving training, and the project continued to be considered a success in attaining contractual goals. Despite this apparent success, the impact on the community fabric also included conflict and tensions, a sense of disempowerment and reduced opportunity to address social isolation for some sections of the community. The impact of the dynamics behind the project was as important to the rural community members as were the learning outcomes in the project goals. However, this was not acknowledged by representatives of the funding source. Instead the community voice appeared to be viewed as dissension. It may have been possible to prevent isolating some sections of the rural community by understanding and managing these processes around project activities. These observations led to the researcher's desire to better understand how the processes of implementing an RCD project or program affect the fabric of a rural community.

RCD clearly involves not only implementing activities and achieving contractual goals, but simultaneously more widely affects the community fabric. Research exploring this interaction can shed light on these community processes. As de Berry (1999) indicated, relationships between non-government organisations and community based organisations have the potential to alter the balance of influence within a community, and community dynamics can in turn affect the process of community development. It is similarly conceivable that as identified in the researcher's experience, other processes behind the implementation of RCD have the potential to affect the fabric of the community. To manage these influences positively, there is a need for theoretical understanding that directly addresses the nature of the interaction between RCD implementation and community processes.

Theory relevant to rural community processes can be sourced from a range of disciplines including psychology, sociology, anthropology and geography, as well as the field of community development. Regardless of the theoretical perspective, community is not seen as a homogenous concept but as a

dynamic experience of ever changing interwoven relationships, simultaneously affected by and interacting with the context in which they exist. Place based communities such as rural communities, are not viewed as static entities. Community has been described as being constructed and reconstructed in an ongoing manner as people engage with others and attribute themselves and others to belong to varying forms of community. In this manner community can be understood as a relational process.

People engage in a multiplicity of communities at any one time, finding meaning, and gaining and expressing identity. The community fabric thus involves the interaction of multiple identities and their accompanying meanings. Meaning, identity and community are interconnected processes involving fluidity of construct, with each changing and shaping the other. This includes people identifying differences which then distinguish one community from another. These processes of differentiation mark the boundaries of the varying communities. Meaning and identity are associated with, and attributed to, these boundaries. The characteristics identified as marking a boundary also change in response to the purpose of distinction. As such, boundaries are dynamic and fluid both in where they are positioned and in the interconnection with meaning and identity. RCD implementation occurs amidst the interwoven dynamics of multiple communities and the associated meanings, identities and boundaries.

Community development is a field underpinned by clear values and principles predominantly grounded in the ideals of social justice. These provide the motivation for community development as well as acting as bench marks for judging practice. Community development theory responds to these principles and is oriented towards achieving 'good community'. To facilitate the development of communities underpinned by a strong sense of agency and broad community engagement in community concerns and actions, recent research (Cheers, Edwards, & Graham, 2003; Cheers & Luloff, 2001) argues for the need to understand how a sustained and active community fabric is developed. This work has focused on increasing understanding of the concept of community

strength as part of the community fabric of rural communities, defined as the integrating function of community that exists not in the action of individuals, but in the capacity of communities to act as a cohesive identity (Cheers, et al., 2003).

Understanding how community strength is developed has implications for RCD policy and practice. However to achieve this, there needs to be an understanding of the processes happening on the ground. That is, looking beyond the purposive change associated with project targets to understand what occurs within the fabric of community. Because RCD strategies to improve community well-being engage with the social infrastructure of community, it is important to understand its broader effect. Theory directly related to the interaction of RCD implementation with rural community processes remains undeveloped. In particular, the question of how RCD implementation affects the community boundary and identity processes is not directly addressed. Such understanding could inform, for example, how a strong community fabric is protected or maintained during RCD projects.

1: 2. Research Bounds and Direction

The preceding quandary of side effects of successful RCD projects, research problem and nature of community set the bounds and direction of the research. The bounds provide the parameters within which the research takes place in the aim to contribute to theory regarding how RCD implementation processes interact with and affect the community fabric.

As community is such a multifaceted concept and experience, research in the field needs to be founded in a sophisticated conceptualisation of community. Within the current study, 'rural community' is conceived as a dynamic and complex relational process within the context of a geographic space, which is intersected by multiple forms of community. This includes the associated fluid meanings, identities and boundaries interwoven in the experience of communities.

Research can only ever take snapshots of a dynamic process such as community. The study focuses on the processes occurring within these excerpts of community experiences, as where similar

processes are found in more than one environment and in more than one moment in time, there is potential for the extrapolation of these processes to other RCD environments and the construction of theory.

The array of disciplines involved in RCD, compels the researcher to utilise a multidisciplinary approach. For the research to be most accessible to RCD practitioners means drawing from knowledge across a variety of disciplines, and presenting the material in a manner that can be applied across varying approaches.

RCD practice is inherently value driven. In seeking to understand the impact of RCD upon community processes, it is important to observe what is happening and not be distracted by what 'should' be happening as defined by an ideological expectation. Theory developed from the ground in this way, has the potential to be applied within a range of practices, underpinned by varying ideological and disciplinary perspectives.

In view of the research problem, this study is not about the funded objectives of RCD projects, but the dynamic interaction between project implementation processes and rural community processes. These processes potentially shape the course of project implementation and affect individuals and the fabric of the community, as individual and collective identity and meaning are shaped by the interaction.

The methodology has been approached pragmatically, endeavouring to utilise methods which might best illuminate the purpose of the enquiry and the research interest, within the constraints of the available resources. The research is about people's individual and collective experiences and perceptions of RCD and community processes, and is therefore well suited to a naturalistic inquiry approach. An emergent methodology has been used as the study seeks to understand what is happening on the ground rather than test a predetermined hypothesis. This design responds to findings in the data throughout the process and reflects a grounded theory approach.

RCD projects are the natural starting point for data collection, however although each project might be considered a case, the research does not use a case study methodology. While the broad contextual data of a particular case may further elucidate community dynamics, the interactive processes are the focus of inquiry, not individual cases. The experiences of RCD participants have been attained through the qualitative method of community members telling their stories in open interviews. Participants were chosen through theoretical sampling, by identifying people who are involved with RCD projects, and could thus “*contribute to the evolving theory*” (Cresswell, 1998, p. 118). Three different rural communities provided the setting for interviews, accessed through current RCD projects. Two projects had an economic orientation and the third related to social wellbeing. One was in rural eastern Victoria and two were from rural areas in southern and western Tasmania.

1: 3. Thesis Structure

The role of Chapter 2 is to provide the context by firstly defining how RCD is understood both in the literature and for the research, and then providing an understanding of the changing rural environment which indicates the importance and context of RCD. It describes the capacity for community development to create positive change, the pressures experienced in rural communities and the resultant wide-ranging use of varying community development approaches in addressing development needs within rural communities. The chapter highlights: the significance of RCD in achieving well-being of and within communities; the breadth and complexity of the field; the challenges experienced in implementing projects; and the related importance of doing RCD research.

Chapter Three, focuses on theory relevant to the research. It first explores conceptualisations of community, rural community, and rural community development. From this review of the literature, community is concluded to be an ongoing relational process involving meaning, identity and boundary processes. This establishes the theoretical understanding of community for the thesis.

The visibility of community processes within small geographically separate communities is highlighted as an important consideration in contrasting rural and urban communities as sites for community research. Community development theory is explored and then considered in light of the effect of RCD upon and its interaction with community processes of the rural (place based) community fabric. The chapter closes with the questions of interest which guide the research.

The research strategy for the study is covered in Chapter Four. A discussion of the methodology explains the naturalistic inquiry and grounded theory approach taken in the research. The design of the research is presented and the data collection and analysis processes are detailed. The manner in which the data is managed in its presentation in the thesis is also described, along with definitions of key terms accepted in the thesis.

Chapters Five and Six are the Findings chapters where an analysis of the qualitative data from the interview transcripts is presented. Chapter Five recounts participants' understanding of community, distinguishing varying community types, and identifying the community processes involved within the fabric of the rural communities of the participating projects. Chapter Six details the community boundary processes as they interact with RCD project implementation.

A discussion of the findings in light of existing research is presented in Chapter Seven. It outlines theory drawn from the data, modelling community processes regarding the interaction of RCD with the rural community processes. The proposed community processes model covers: rural community as a process; the boundary processes involved; and how these relate to the effect of RCD in its interaction with the community fabric. The model is discussed in light of existing community development frameworks, and consideration given to where the model and existing frameworks interconnect.

The final chapter summarises the thesis with a discussion concerning the implications of the community process model for RCD research and practice. Strengths and limitations of the study and

the related extent to which the findings can be extrapolated beyond the rural community context are considered. Suggestions for further research are made.

1: 4. Conclusion

RCD as a field of endeavour addressing a wide array of human need is found across many nations. Its theory and practice cross a range of academic and professional disciplines. The potential of RCD projects to generate benefits for rural communities in areas such as health, social, psychological and economic well-being, has been well demonstrated. However, RCD is a complex arena involving many and varying disciplines, orientations, motivations and activities. Additional complexity is experienced in the relational dynamics of communities with which RCD interplays. Research considering these dynamics as they relate to RCD practice can provide new insights for funders, practitioners and community members alike, as participants navigating the process. The following chapters detail an exploration of the interaction between RCD implementation and the community processes of boundaries, identity and meaning within the fabric of the rural community.

Chapter Two: Impetus Behind Rural Community Development Research

Rural community development scope and the rural context

The potential impact, complex nature and scope of rural community development (RCD), provide the backdrop for a renewed interest in RCD. Over the past decade, this interest has been evident within research and in all levels of government. This chapter discusses the impetus behind the current study, and examines why RCD is of growing importance. Beginning with a broad definition of RCD, the chapter clarifies the activities and approaches that are included under the banner of RCD and acknowledges the breadth and complexity of a field of endeavour full of interwoven dynamics and relationships. The chapter briefly reviews the capacity of community development to positively impact rural communities across a range of human concerns and then considers the current context of Australian rural communities which both contributes to a renewed interest in RCD and establishes some of the dynamics of the settings for RCD projects.

2: 1. What is Rural Community Development?

Within community development (CD) literature and practice RCD is described both as a philosophical approach towards improving the well-being (economic, social and psychological) of people living in rural areas, and the activities associated with achieving the desired change. Simply but broadly put, *“rural community development is planned intervention to stimulate [improvement in] . . . the quality of life, or well-being of people residing in sparsely settled areas.”* (Summers, 1986, p. 360). RCD is the implementation of CD within a rural context. This section clarifies what this entails. It identifies the broad range of disciplines involved, the complex context of community and the variety of activities that fall within CD. CD material as it relates to RCD is discussed.

CD and RCD practice and research have considerable breadth. Any brief exploration of the terms will identify literature across a wide range of fields including policy development (rural and social), business and community partnerships, child welfare, community psychology, regional analysis, nursing, welfare services, social work, sociology, anthropology, arts, environment, rural and remote health, health education, applied psychology, vocational education, community development and paediatrics, to name a few. These fields of CD practice are found internationally and relate to developed and developing countries and cultures.

CD is complex, not just in the varying theoretical and practice perspectives from a range of disciplines, orientations, activities and cultures, but also in the multiplicity of relationships involved within the community to which these perspectives are brought. The significance and complexity of relationships in community based work is apparent throughout CD literature. Casswell (2001, p. 23) describes community as *“the site of the mediating structures that intervene between the domain of everyday life of individuals and the larger social, political and economic context”*. More specifically addressing RCD, Cavaye (2001) acknowledges that

rural community development occurs within a complex interrelated ‘system’ of communities, sub-communities, individuals, external agencies and internal organisation. Each entity makes decisions and takes action under the influence of each other through a dynamic set of relationships. (p. 115)

Many relationships are acknowledged between individuals, NGOs, sub groups, and external agencies that are interplayed with culture, spirituality, infrastructure; economy, policy, passion, leadership and the use of language (Arce, 2003, Bawden, 2001, Beecham, 2004, Brawley, 1994, Casswell, 2001, Cavaye, 2001, Cavaye, 2003, Cheers & Hall, 1994, Cheers, Harvey, Clarke, & Heffernan, 2002, Cheers & Luloff, 2001, Chile & Simpson, 2004, Falk, 2001, Falk & Guenther, 1999, Ife, 2002, Kitahara, 1996, Lennie & Hearn, 2003, Lockie, 2000, Montero, 2005, Nissen, Merrigan, & Kraft, 2005, Shaw, 2008, Sorensen, Atchison, Argent, Archer, Jobes, Walmsley, & Epps, 2002, Trout, Docecki, Newbrough, & O’Gorman, 2003). CD is, as Kenny (2006, p. xiii) states, *“full of ambiguities, contradictions and*

paradoxes. Because it is driven by politics and passion, and because it brings together values, principles and practices . . .”.

Research in the area of RCD brings the challenge of finding a path through these interrelated dynamics and multiple influences within the community fabric. This fabric is the dynamic product of interacting social dynamics, personalities, history, geography, and economic and social resources (Cheers & Luloff, 2001). RCD plays out an intricate dance influencing and influenced by the fabric of the community. In the same way that RCD cannot be separated from the history and social dynamics of a community, rural community research needs to consider the community fabric. The current study focuses on this interaction between RCD activities and community fabric.

A wide range of activities fall under the banner of CD. A useful way to understand them is through a summary of what has varyingly been described as CD forms (Cheers, 1998; Cheers & Luloff, 2001), activity types (McArdle, 1999) or methods (Bhattacharyya, 2004). These include:

- those focusing on the gathering, maintenance or provision of information;
- those addressing power relations such as advocacy through one-to-one activities or seeking legislative change;
- those with a networking orientation, building linkages between individuals and sectors;
- participation based activities, seeking involvement, planning and decision-making by all stakeholders;
- capacity building activities such as awareness raising, self help, service provision, resource provision and a sense of ownership of community action to sustain CD capacity

(Cheers, 1998; Cheers & Luloff, 2001; McArdle, 1999). These activities are found within a range of projects such as social enterprises, leadership programs, infrastructure provision and skills development programs (Beer, Maude, & Pritchard, 2003; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006), across the varying fields within which CD is utilised. Likewise, they are all part of RCD practice.

In implementing these activities the literature describes a range of stages and models. Kaufman (1959) first developed the concept of phases of community action as part of an interactional approach to community, which is further detailed by Wilkinson (1970; Taylor, Wilkinson and Cheers 2008). This details that CD moves through five phases, beginning with awareness (a rise in interest of a need and solution), moving to organisation of sponsorship and co-ordination of control over the action, followed by decision making to set the goals and strategies for their achievement), then resource mobilisation (gaining participation and resources) and finishing with resource application through implementing the activities. There are many other models that map the steps of doing community development. For example, Taylor, et al (2008) outline four other frameworks, including: 'participative development' covering 'what', 'who' and 'how', which is based on the empirical study of successes and failures of two decades of United Nations projects; 'building capable communities', an empowerment framework detailing the need to build capacity through the nine domains of participation, leadership, organisational structures, problem assessment, resource mobilisation, 'asking why?', linking with others, outside agents and program management; the 'building collective capacity' framework developed from an action research project which focuses on the four stages of identifying common ground, working cooperatively, working in partnership and working across the community; and Assets-Based Community Development (ABCD) which is a strengths based framework, which focuses on community engagement, community asset assessment, and using strengths to create action.

In a review of community projects, Taylor, et al (2008) identify four conceptual approaches: a *contributions approach* where professional developers engage voluntary community participation in a predetermined project; an *instrumental approach* where professionals lead community participation in projects, where the focus is on improved health and well-being as an end result, not as part of the process; an *empowerment approach* which seeks to empower community members in taking control over issues affecting their health and well-being; and a *developmental approach* which

engages “*as an interactive, evolutionary process, embedded in a community*” (Taylor, et al., 2008, p. 88).

In sociological literature on community development, a distinction has been made between the development *in* community and the development *of* community. Development *in* community focuses on community as a system of social processes and thus well-being can be improved through improved services or economic growth (Kaufman, 1959; Summers, 1986). Development *of* community is based on the idea that being an active part of community is a causal factor in personal well-being and accordingly development is about building communication and co-operation amongst local groups (Summers, 1986; Wilkinson 1979). The two approaches are not necessarily exclusive in that through achieving development *in* a place-based community, the development *of* community may result (Summers, 1986).

Such a range of activities and perspectives leads to questions regarding what attributes these have in common as CD. Based on the four conceptual approaches identified above, it might be argued that only those falling within the bounds of a developmental approach are true CD, while the rest are other forms of community work. However, there are other perspectives on what constitutes CD. Bhattacharyya (2004, p. 14) notes that “*to be called community development, the activity must be animated by the pursuit of solidarity and agency, by adhering to the principles of self-help, felt needs and participation*”, where solidarity means “*a shared identity (derived from place, ideology, or interest) and a code for conduct or norms, both deep enough that a rupture affects the members emotionally and other ways*”. Bhattacharyya (2004, p. 5) further argues that “*the purpose of community development should be seen as different both from its methods and the techniques to implement the methods.*”

In both the conceptual approach and Bhattacharyya’s construct of RCD, its methods and techniques are defined by the principles behind the activity, not the activity alone. There is consensus across the literature and particularly within the Australian context, that this purpose and value base are

what characterise CD (Blackshaw, 2010; Ife, 1995, 2002; Kenny, 2006). The current study encompasses projects underpinned by social justice values and from the preceding range of activities and conceptual approaches.

Therefore, RCD is varied and complex, not only in the variety of disciplines, orientations and activities, but also in how RCD activities interact with the community fabric. Research in the area of RCD processes needs to be relevant across these variances, and cannot ignore the context and processes of the rural community.

2: 2. Benefits of Rural Community Development

CD has significant potential to positively impact health, and social and economic wellbeing within rural communities. Particularly pertinent is research demonstrating a positive relationship between active community involvement in community projects and activities, and sought-after results including economic growth, reduced unemployment, higher employment and income levels, and the successful resolution of social problems (Brawley, 1994; Casswell, 2001; Chalmers & Bramadat, 1996; Cheers, et al., 2002). These benefits are also associated with the physical and psychological health and well-being of a community (Chalmers & Bramadat, 1996; Nowell, Berkowitz, Deacon, & Foster-Fishman, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2008). Consequently, CD is considered by practitioners, academics and within government policy and planning, to be a best practice approach for responding to the development needs of rural communities and regions.

CD activities have advantages over purely economic development as they can deliver broader benefits for a community. The link between CD and increased economic benefit initially dominated RCD thinking as the purpose of development. Later, concepts of human and social capacity building, and social capital developed as having a role in supporting and complementing economic development (Arce, 2003; Brawley, 1994; Cheers & Hall, 1994; Courvisanos, 2001; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Harvey & Cheers, 2003). However it is not only economic development activities,

which provide economic gain for communities. Efforts focused on human capacity building have been shown to complement other developmental foci, as well as generate benefits comparable to the provision of infrastructure (Brawley, 1994). There is considerable literature demonstrating direct economic benefit from CD activities (Brawley, 1994; Casswell, 2001; Chalmers & Bramadat, 1996; Cheers, et al., 2002; Ife, 1995). Further, while studies indicate that CD is likely to stimulate economic growth, economic focused development is not as likely to stimulate social development (Cheers, et al., 2002; Cheers & Luloff, 2001; Harvey & Cheers, 2003). For these reasons, fostering CD is now considered best practise as a component of regional development, which historically was based on assumptions that economic development improves health and well-being within a region (Brawley, 1994; Cheers, et al., 2002; Garlick & Pryor, 2002b; Sorensen, et al., 2002).

In the past two decades the Australian government has typically associated CD with achieving specific development targets as well as economic growth, when determining funding for rural communities. The growing CD profession considers that the effects on social well-being which accompany the processes of CD, are as important as achieving the project targets (Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006). There is an understanding amongst CD practitioners and academics that social life needs to be recognised in its own right within the process and planning of development. Improved quality of peoples' lives due to the CD process is emphasised as a significant end in itself, not just as an adjunct to specific project targets.

In summary, CD approaches and activities are effective in creating positive change in rural communities. These include not only economic benefits but also benefits relating to the social and psychological well-being of community members. CD is therefore a valued approach in many fields working in rural areas. Recognised by practitioners, academics and governments as a best practice approach for responding to the needs of rural communities and regions, RCD is found globally, delivered through government services and humanitarian organisations. However, different orientations result in tensions within RCD implementation, including balancing delivering on project

goals with the less tangible but equally significant social benefits of people engaging within a development process.

2: 3. Renewed Foci on Rural Community Development

Worldwide, RCD has been rising in significance over the past three decades. Since the 1980's there has been increasing pressure on rural communities in Australia, United States of America (USA), Canada, New Zealand (NZ), United Kingdom (UK) and Europe including the reduction of health, financial and other services in rural areas (Barr, 2005; Brawley, 1994; Cheers & Hall, 1994; Cheers & O'Toole, 2001; Courvisanos, 2001; Desjardins, Halseth, Leblanc, & Ryser, 2002; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Falk, 2001; Kenny, 2006; Kenyon, Black, Cavaye, Duff, O'Meara, & Palmer, 2001; Lawrence & Hungerford, 1994; Sorensen, et al., 2002). The initial decline and the continued disadvantage in many rural areas resulted in a renewed focus by governments on RCD as a mechanism to build local sustainable capacity. In the past decade the pressures of change on rural areas have continued to build, challenging rural culture and the sense of rural community identity experienced by long term residents. These challenges mean that the concurrent renewed interest within community literature in the link between community and identity and emotional wellbeing (Cheers, et al., 2003) is significant for RCD.

2: 3.1 The Australian rural context

The current context of rural communities establishes some of the dynamics of the settings for RCD projects and contributes to a renewed interest in RCD. Rural communities in Australia were generally established around primary production. Originally this was labour intensive and time consuming, resulting in small, often family-based businesses and lifestyles. Over the last 30 years, the trend in agricultural trade due to technological and scientific changes has meant more can be produced at less cost. However without increased demand, prices fall, resulting in a need for increased production for farms to remain viable (Barr, 2005; Kenyon, et al., 2001; Lawrence & Hungerford, 1994). This led to many smaller farms being aggregated into large production

properties, or diversification of economic activity with ventures such as tourism and boutique farming. Simultaneously, there was a depopulation of the small towns which previously supported the greater number of families on the surrounding land. Instead, a few regional centres experienced growth, servicing as the name suggests, the larger region. There was also an exodus of youth, particularly young women, seeking increased education, training and employment opportunities in either regional centres or cities (Barr, 2005; Cheers & Hall, 1994; Kenyon, et al., 2001; Stockdale, 2004). In Australia, these changes have been evidenced throughout the past century, with around 60% of the Australian population living in rural and regional areas at the beginning of the 20th century, compared to 30% in 2000 (Kenyon, et al., 2001) and 12% by 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

While, in the first decade of the new century there have been significant population increases in the major cities and overall, there is considerable variation at the state and territory level. There is a wide range in the percentage of the population living in outer regional and remote areas, from Victoria with less than 5% to 35% in Tasmania (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). As summarised in Table 1, despite fluctuations in population growth, the overall trend for the last decade has been growth in regional areas, and stability or decline in remote and very remote areas throughout Australian states (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

	Major Cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	TOTAL
New South Wales	10%	9%	1%	-13%	-17%	9%
Victoria	14%	11%	4%	-11%	-	13%
Queensland	21%	20%	18%	2%	-1%	19%
South Australia	8%	14%	3%	6%	-16%	8%
Western Australia	17%	28%	9%	8%	4%	17%
Tasmania	-	7%	7%	3%	-1%	7%
Northern Territory	-	-	16%	9%	13%	14%
Australian Capital Territory	11%	-2%	-	-	-	11%
Other Territories	-	-37%	-	-	2%	-5%
Australia	14%	13%	9%	4%	3%	13%

Table 1: Australian Population Growth percentages for the decade ending 2010

Looking beneath the overall growth trends in population, there are mixed outcomes regarding socio-economic status (SES), with some areas considered advantaged and others disadvantaged. In rural towns and areas, those on the perimeter of peri-urban zones of large centres, are more likely to have experienced positive SES outcomes. However, overall there are more disadvantaged rural and remote towns and areas than there are advantaged (Baum, O'Connor, & Stimson, 2005).

The initial depopulation of regional and rural areas has slowed. In some areas there has been an influx of new residents due to a mining boom, however many of these are temporary and/or part-time, being fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) as they work for periods of time (eg a fortnight or month), then return home for a similar period. In others, there are new residents (often retired) who have moved from large metropolitan cities to embrace a change of lifestyle. Coined 'sea change' on coastal areas and 'tree or hill change' in inland areas, this phenomenon has affected change in the sense of community identity, particularly for long term residents as they adjust to new ideas, experiences and expectations of community life (Barr, 2005; Bourke, 2001b; Murphy, 2006). Sea/tree change in large non-metropolitan cities and towns has been associated with welfare and retirement drivers, while for smaller cities and towns it has been related to a broad range of lifestyle drivers. These smaller cities and towns, despite population growth, range in advantage and disadvantage, with sea/tree change and mining areas associated with positive SES outcomes. Conversely, in areas with a less diverse economic base, there are indicators of disadvantage (Baum, et al., 2005).

Rural communities have therefore experienced varied yet significant change in the last three decades. From initial depopulation and economic pressures, some regions have more recently experienced population growth, while remote areas have either stabilised or declined. The migration of populations also affects rural community culture and identity as well as contributing to the ageing population in rural areas. Although some rural areas comprise a predominantly positive SES, many rural and remote areas continue to experience disadvantaged conditions. In addition to

contributing to the impetus for RCD these issues of identity, and the economic and social conditions set the context and relational dynamics within which RCD occurs.

2: 3.2 Renewed focus

As a result of the economic and population changes occurring in rural communities, and arguably the influence of post-modern and neo-liberal thinking (Casswell, 2001; Courvisanos, 2001; Hudson, 2004; Liepins, 2000), RCD has greater importance internationally, nationally and locally. This is reflected in a renewed focus by governments on funding community initiatives, some through the structure of the countries' government services, others through humanitarian organisations. By the late 1990's in Australia, using CD approaches within rural development projects was an emergent response to rural down-turn (Dibden & Cheshire, 2005). The aim of such initiatives was to build community capacity in anticipation of it contributing to improved social and physical health within communities (Casswell, 2001; Cavaye, 2001; Cheers & O'Toole, 2001; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Kenny, 2006; Lennie & Hearn, 2003; Ritchie, Parry, Gnich, & Platt, 2004; Sorensen, et al., 2002).

As Hudson (2004, p. 253) succinctly states, *"the language of community and community development is heavily used in government discourse as a key policy initiative across the board..."*. At a national level, the Australian Government budgets millions of dollars each year for community oriented programmes in rural areas (Anderson, Campbell, & Kelly, 2004; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005). For example, during the past decade in the 2003-04 financial year budget included, \$61.8 million allocated for the Regional Partnership programme, \$26.4 million towards the Sustainable Regions programme (Anderson & Tuckey, 2003), and \$356.8 million over four years towards the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy programmes including Communities for Children and Local Answers (Anderson, et al., 2004). The stated approach and purpose for this funding *"is to work in partnership with communities, government and the private sector to foster the development of self-reliant communities and regions"* (Department of Transport and Regional Services, 2005). By 2011, a change of government has resulted in some changes in initiatives, however \$1 billion has been

allocated over five years for Regional Development Australia to empower local community to develop local solutions (Australian Government, 2011b), and programs such as Communities for Children continue with expanded portfolios and districts and an extra \$42.5 million over four years from July 2012 (this program covers rural and urban communities) (Australian Government, 2011a). Clearly the focus is on building community capacity (Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Lennie & Hearn, 2003). Frequently the role of capacity building is given to the not-for-profit sector via tendered and contractual processes.

State governments in Australia also place significant emphasis on CD. This is apparent through the existence of departments such as the Department for Victorian Communities, Western Australia's Department for Community Development, the Northern Territory's Department for Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, and South Australia's Department for Families and Communities. In Tasmania, while there was no community development focused department/ministry until 2006, the Tasmania Together state government initiative to provide a 20 year direction for Tasmania until 2020, has nine goals with 67 corresponding benchmarks directly relating to community (Tasmania Together Progress Board, 2005). There are also many community programmes for rural areas funded through departments such as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment. Local governments throughout Australia also provide CD grants. Thus, across Australia there are thousands of not-for-profit non-government organisations receiving Australian, State and Local Government funding to develop, implement and run RCD programmes.

Alongside this expenditure on RCD, is a renewed interest in community as more than just a locality. Research has explored the roles that cohesion, inclusion, identity, security, and wellbeing play in community (Cheers, et al., 2003; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Lennie & Hearn, 2003). The relationship between identity and CD is multi-faceted. A strong sense of collective identity is associated with increased participation, positively impacting community development (Reisch and Guyet, 2007).

Community participation is associated with the provision of a sense of security, identity, purpose, and belonging (Bhattacharyya, 2004, Connell, 2002, Bauman, 2001, Burkett, 2001, Kenny, 2006) which also interconnect with members' emotional, social and physical well-being. These aspects will be considered in more detail in the following chapter.

Over the past decade RCD has been subject to increasing attention across all levels of government, apparent in policy, the development of departments and the funding of projects and programs. This attention has resulted in funding RCD activity across the community sector. There has also been a renewed interest in the role of CD in identity and well-being.

2: 4. Conclusion

RCD is a complex field with varying perspectives, approaches and interacting variables. The significance of RCD is highlighted by the building change pressures in the rural context and the success of RCD in facilitating positive change. RCD has been demonstrated to effectively deliver sought-after benefits towards improved economic, social, physical and psychological wellbeing in communities. Therefore, RCD has become a popular approach in government and non-government arenas, across a range of nations seeking to address a wide range of needs. The considerable expenditure on CD activities by all levels of government and through the community sector, further accentuates the importance of the field.

As presented in the first chapter, the processes of RCD implementation interact with community processes. Regardless of whether project objectives are achieved, this interaction affects the fabric of the community and at times has unexpected adverse or positive effects on community members. Given the dynamics that make up the fabric of a community, it is not surprising that there are tensions between different approaches and within communities. At the same time, the wide use of RCD highlights the importance of understanding how the processes surrounding RCD interplay and change the community fabric. Exploring the interaction between RCD process and community

processes needs to take into account the breadth of RCD and the complexity of relationships, all embedded in the community context. Further research will be useful not only for rural communities, but for the range of disciplines engaged in the variety of approaches, methods and techniques that are RCD. Similarly, it may be useful for government and non-government organisations across many cultures and countries, as they seek the benefits of RCD approaches in addressing the challenges faced by rural communities.

Chapter Three: Theory and Rural Community Development

Literature Review

In seeking to understand the impact of the dynamics of rural community development (RCD) implementation upon the community fabric, it is important to understand the current conceptual and theoretical perspectives influencing RCD. There is a long history of shifting understandings of the concepts, which have potential consequences for policy and ultimately communities' members. Community theory provides insight into the form, functioning and key processes of rural communities and thus establishes the foundations for the current study. The ideological underpinnings of community development (CD) and theory which directly address CD practice further provide a framework for comprehending the dynamics of RCD. Accordingly, the sections of this chapter cover:

- *Conceptualising Community* with its changing and varying forms, and the inherent links with identity and boundaries as community unfolds as a relational process;
- *Conceptualising Rural Community* in light of community as process, as well as the accentuated workings of community processes in the rural context;
- *Community and Rural Community Development* as it is influenced and practiced, through ideological and theoretical frameworks; and establishes a
- *Research Opportunity*, through summarising the case for a gap in theory regarding the interaction between community processes and RCD processes. This then sets the specific research question for the current study.

3: 1. Conceptualising Community

Despite the millions of dollars committed to RCD, there continues to be differing conceptualisations regarding community, its meaning, constitution and significance. The challenges associated with the breadth of experiences of community, uses of the term, and the corresponding links to varying

theoretical understandings of community are well documented (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Burkett, 2001; Cohen, 1989; Liepins, 2000; Montero, 2005; Shaw, 2008). Detailed reviews on the concept of community present a history of continued ambiguity and paradox (Barbesino, 1997). Given the renewed focus on community and CD activity, it is recognised across a range of disciplines that there is a need to better understand community (Cheers, et al., 2003; Cnaan, Milofsky, & Hunter, 2007; Connell, 2002). It has also been argued that the problem of an ontological understanding of community be left to social science historians and instead, research should focus more pragmatically on its current plurality and use (Barbesino, 1997; Cohen, 1989; Plant, 1974). To this end, the intention here is not to definitively address all the issues, but to provide the foundational understanding of community for this research by highlighting key conceptualisations of community.

3: 1.1 Brief history and orientation

The varied and changing conceptions of community have been documented and discussed over more than a century, beginning with significant early contributions in the works of Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Tönnies, and the Chicago School, and on to the renewed interest in community over the past two decades (for examples of these summaries and discussions see Blackshaw, 2010; Cnaan, et al., 2007). The key issues grappled with throughout this time responded to the changes brought about by industrialisation and were viewed through contrasting 'community' and 'society'. It was argued that community involved close ties in kin, structure, economics, and social and emotional experiences, as was present in the rural districts and towns at the time. Further, it was contended that community was being replaced or undermined by society as manifest in the far looser ties of the emerging cities and larger towns of the Industrial Era (Blackshaw, 2010; Bourke, 2001b; Lockie, 2001; Tönnies, 1957). These initial conceptualisations of community were confined by assumptions that community is spatially and temporally contained in that it exists in a geographic space at a particular time, and entails a prescribed way of being, comprising close relationships across all areas of living.

Blackshaw (2010) in his determination to offer conceptual precision to community, describes the pre-industrial community as “*pre-modern community*” and presents the case for it being the only ‘community’, in that it has a strong ontology in providing the foundation for human existence. Like the early writings on community he considers modern society and versions of community to have much weaker ontologies as while they contribute to identity, the structure and interactions do not define a person’s existence in full as they lack solid foundations, being always movable and contestable. This perspective clearly highlights the role of community in identity and meaning, and indeed the role of identity in community which continue to be interwoven in community literature.

Defining the only ‘true’ community enters into a historical and philosophical debate. Blackshaw (2010) and Bauman (2008) argue that for conceptual precision, the term community should be used with critical forethought, not in contexts where alternative notions could be used. However, the present research proceeds from a more pragmatic understanding that the form of community may have changed, but ‘community’ continues to exist. These changing forms continue to involve the linking of people via commonalities and are inherently associated with identity.

Recent literature still contains spatial and normative orientations to community, and often in conjunction. Community space is frequently defined geographically by locality, such as towns and regions, and is often referred to as ‘place based’ or geographical community. A community of place includes the relationships of people in a physical location and perhaps more importantly, the meaning people associate with the geographic space and its physical features (Cheers, Darracott, & Lonne, 2007; Taylor, et al., 2008). Even though contained by physical boundaries, the focus here is on relationships and the accompanying meaning and corresponding identity associated with the locality. The physical space of a locality, including services and infrastructure can be considered the settlement, while the community is understood to be the interaction of people within and with the physical space (Cheers, et al., 2007). There are also expectations that a community of place involves strong close ties and people holding a sense of belonging together in the place. An understanding of

place based community overlayed with this normative view of what community should ideally be, has maintained relevance due to the continued existence of both small place based communities and the coinciding individual needs of people that are met through engagement within these communities (Mannarini & Fedi, 2009).

Central to a normative understanding of community is the community experience of its members. This experience is associated with a sense of solidarity or belonging, and is connected to individual and collective identity. There is an anticipation of cohesion in how members engage with each other in the daily living activities within the space of the community. This is evident for example, in the description of a normative view as seeing community as

a structure within which people have a sense of solidarity – being in things together – and this creates a sense of belonging to each other. This in turn results in positive affirmations for people because of their membership of the community. (Taylor, et al., 2008, p. 30)

Normative expectations can be applied to place based community as well as other forms of community. For example, there has been research focused on community of place seeking to determine what should be, or what is 'good' community (Cheers, et al., 2003; Kenny, 2006). Similarly, although Hunter (2007) seeks to encompass the breadth and complexity of varying forms of community by conceptualising community as a "variable quality" rather than a "thing", the position is still underpinned with normative assumptions. This is evident in then determining "the degree of communityness" of specific cases of community, based on the three dimensions of shared ecology, social organisation, and shared culture and symbolic meanings.

Community from such normative perspectives is an ideological concept and as such, research founded on this orientation is value-laden. As these ideological understandings exist, it is important that the associated values and meanings not be ignored in community research. However, if values set the direction of enquiry, there is a risk that what is happening in community may be masked by the quest to determine what 'should' be community. An endeavour in this research will be to

accommodate the variable conceptualisations of community, studying community as it is found, including but not founded on ideological orientations.

While community is frequently used in connection with the relational dynamics of people in a geographically bounded place, it has long been used functionally to encompass commonalities including demographic, psychological and social factors such as interests, age, economic status or gender, and particularly those aspects that engender a sense of connectedness and involve social relationship (Brawley, 1994; Burroughs & Eby, 1998; Casswell, 2001; Desjardins, et al., 2002; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Puddifoot, 1996). This descriptive perspective encompasses community in the varying forms in which it is perceived, and with less regard to spatial and temporal restrictions. It is also evident in community studies where the emphasis has involved consideration of power relations, meanings informing identity and the symbolic nature in the experience and expression of community. Such research is founded in a phenomenological understanding of community, exploring and describing community as it is experienced by people (Blackshaw, 2010; de Berry, 1999).

A re-occurring topic throughout community studies literature is the concept of communities of interest. The generally accepted interpretation of community in this case is as a group of people with both an interest in common and social interaction of varying degrees in conjunction with the commonality (Blackshaw, 2010; Desjardins, et al., 2002; Kenny, 2006; Komaromi, 2003; Taylor, et al., 2008). The concept covers a broad range of pursuits across for example, recreational, political, spiritual or professional concerns and these are found within and across place based communities (Desjardins, et al., 2002; Kenny, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2008). Like the afore described conceptualisations of community, communities of interest are seen to provide an avenue for the expression of identity (Blackshaw, 2010) with the ongoing experience of interaction also shaping identity through the shared meaning (Komaromi, 2003).

The concept of virtual communities is a phenomenon describing communication and social networking of people via internet and mobile information technology. Due to the indirect nature of contact and interaction and that virtual communities are not constrained by proximity or place, there is debate regarding whether these are a different form of community or are better understood as social networks (Blackshaw & Fielding-Llyod, 2010). Although virtual communities are founded predominantly on weak ties, like communities of interest, they afford the opportunity for expressing identity and a sense of belonging (Blackshaw & Fielding-Llyod, 2010). Despite debate, the concept continues to be commonly utilised.

Contemporary Australian usages of community include both descriptive and normative perspectives. It is variously descriptive of social structure, social organisation and belonging, including the manifestation of shared identity, a geographic locality, and as an administrative unit. There are also the normative value based perspectives of community in terms of ethical public good, as a symbol of civil society at work with shared values, meaning and activity (Cheers, et al., 2003; Dixon, 2003; Kenny, 2006). Research exploring how rural people understand their place based community has similarly found normative and descriptive understandings in participants' dialogue, as well as a combination of the two (Cheers, et al., 2003).

Thus, community is not a homogeneous concept. The history of varying definitions, perspectives and ideological foundations, also influenced by different political paradigms (Brent, 1997; Shaw, 2008), often highlights what may be considered a weaknesses of imprecision in such diversity of interpretation. Yet it is also recognized that for CD, a conceptualisation of community needs to be sufficiently sophisticated to be able to accommodate the diversity and complexity of, within and between communities in their varying forms (Cheers, et al., 2003; Cnaan, et al., 2007; Connell, 2002; Kenny, 2006; Liepins, 2000). By acknowledging rather than ignoring the paradoxes and juggling both the state and process of community it is possible to strengthen the knowledge-base and understanding of community (Montero, 2005). Within the current study, the endeavour will be to

take up these challenges through recognising the complexity, variability and paradox of community, dealing with the normative and descriptive understandings and differing ideological positions as they interconnect with RCD processes. This is begun through drawing on common threads across these understandings. Recognisable within the perspectives reviewed is that community involves the grouping of people by self or others and that this is entwined with peoples' individual and/or collective identity.

3: 1.2 Community and identity

Throughout the literature across the range of perspectives involved in community research, the connection with values, identity and meaning is either directly addressed or assumed. The interdependent nature of individual and collective identity in community processes and activity is explored through anthropology, psychology, sociology, community psychology, social work, and community development. Interest extends beyond academic disciplines, with for example, local governments seeking to understand the link between physical locality and identity (Puddifoot, 1996).

While-ever people continue to seek interaction around common interests and shared values (Mannarini & Fedi, 2009), community involvement and activity provides a point of reference for people's lives which become meaningful to them, contributing to their sense of identity individually as well as collectively (Cohen, 1982; Kenny, 2006; Mewett, 1982). Briefly considered here, is the connection between identity and community. Without delving in depth into the research surrounding identity and self, individual or personal identity is accepted here as the meaning a person assigns to themselves regarding their sense of place in the world (Vander Zanden, 1981). Collective identity refers to a shared consciousness or sense of connection members' gain from being associated with a collective, that is, where there is a collective sense of difference from others (Cohen, 1982; Komaromi, 2003). Both aspects of identity are influenced through interaction with others.

Farrar (2001) strongly present the enmeshment of community and identity in describing that

It [community] draws its psychological strength from levels of motivation deeper than those of mere volition or interest, and it achieves its fulfilment in a submergence of individual will that is not possible in unions of mere convenience or rational assent. Community is fusion of feeling and thought, of tradition and commitment, or membership and volition. It may be found in, or given symbolic expression by, locality, religion, nation, race, occupation, or crusade. (p. 4)

Likewise, Bhattacharyya (2004) argues for understanding community as solidarity, and defines this as

a shared identity (derived from place, ideology, or interest) and a code for conduct or norms, both deep enough that a rupture affects the members emotionally and other ways. (p. 14)

Both writers highlight the psychological investment of the individual in the collective experience.

Concordantly, community has been conceptualised as a repository for meaning and identity.

Identity is expressed and symbolised in interactions, relationship, names, symbols and rituals

(Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Cohen, 1989), which all create meaning. Further, members actively construct the community identity to give meaning to their experience (Colombo & Senatore, 2005;

Hodgett & Royle, 2003; Kenny, 2006). In this manner, meaning, identity and community are interconnected processes involving fluidity of construct with each changing and shaping the others.

Referring to the geographical bounded community, Connell (2002) describes it as a place based communication system which reduces the complexity of life. Defining a place through differentiating it from other places gives meaning and a sense of connectedness for people, making the world comprehensible. While Connell's focus is community as a system of communication, the relationship with individual and collective identity is an assumed foundation, as is the importance of community in creating meaning. Similarly research on RCD community processes also cannot ignore these connections.

Blackshaw (2010) explores identity and its relationship to varying forms of community. As previously noted, he argues that “*pre-modern*” community provided the underlying source of being and

identity. In contrast, community has since had “*the function of rendering meaning and evoking nostalgia and closeness*” (Blackshaw, 2010, p. 28) in a world where individualisation rather than community provide the foundation for identity and being. Blackshaw (2010) contends that community is now a place where identity is expressed and realised. In this manner communities can be understood as existing in response to identity rather than prior to identity (Bauman, 2001; Bauman, 2008).

Blackshaw (2010) considers community in its current forms to be “*fragmentary and vulnerable to discontinuity*” (p. 41) taking many different shapes, holding to varying standards and rules, and again a space for the expression of identity. He describes these as “*. . . cleave communities – cleave meaning both to slice into episodes and to cling to . . .*” (p. 16) as they exist only for the period while people choose to belong, so to express identity.

Cleave communities describe well the interconnection of individual identity with community, responding particularly to the capacity for mobility into and out of communities. However, the collective identity of, for example, place based communities such as found in small rural towns, appears to involve a more lasting sense of community identity as reflected in narratives about historical community experiences. Cheers, Edwards and Graham’s (2003) account of narratives in small rural towns is an example of members shaping a collective identity which may continue to exist beyond the life of the initial members.

Regardless of whether one considers current community formations to be fleeting and without solid foundations as presented by Blackshaw, or whether there is a case for collective identities being a more lasting concept as seen in the place based community narratives, some assumptions can be made for the present research. Taking as the first basis the perspective that community continues to exist in changing and varying forms, it can further be assumed that community and identity (both individual and collective) are intrinsically connected. From these premises, it is possible to begin to capture the complexity of place based community as incorporating not only the associated

interaction of a multitude of other community forms, such as communities of interest, but also the dynamic interchange with identity. RCD is implemented amongst these complexities of the community fabric.

Further, identity is not a singular concept but involves multiple community memberships. Studies illustrate the existence of multiple communities within place based communities and that people simultaneously hold multiple membership across a range of communities (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Cohen, 1982a, 1982b; Cohen, 1989; Hyde & Chavis, 2007; Kenny, 2006; Larsen, 1982). For example, Brodsky's (2001) study of multiple psychological senses of community within a place based community setting illustrates that people engage in multiple communities through an array of nested sub-communities which are defined by the individual and collective roles and experiences. Additionally, inherent in this experience is peoples' concurrent engagement in multiple identities as associated with their roles across each community (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Liepins, 2000; Vergunst, 2006). Thus studying community processes in RCD engages not only multiple forms of community but also the accompanying multiplicity of identities.

Research and work in the area of place based community must take into account the plurality of community and the associated significance for meaning and identity. While there are philosophical, ideological and political debates about what constitutes community, people in their daily living describe their experience of community in multiple forms and roles and as closely associated with identity.

3: 1.3 Community boundaries

Cohen (1989) suggests the meaning of community is established in the boundaries people create during social interactions which distinguish one community from another. In this manner, just as individuals develop and shape their identity in becoming aware of themselves through interaction with the world, the same can be said of communities (Cohen, 1982c). In daily living, people identify commonality and difference which then forms the basis for boundaries when there is a desire to

collectively distinguish one entity from another (Cnaan & Breyman, 2007). These collective boundaries are drawn to confirm and create a sense of identity in contrast to another (Brent, 1997).

Although there is a strong focus on the human interaction component of community, it is also clear that face-to-face interaction is not essential to identify as, or be identified as a member of a community. Through drawing a boundary from which inclusion or exclusion in community can be determined, as a process of social identity individuals classify themselves or are categorised by others as being part of a community (Reisch & Guyet, 2007); an us-them delineation. Community boundaries are thus most apparent at the point of difference from another community. As such, boundaries are often highlighted when there are expressed struggles and conflicts due to community differences. This has also been described as “*community as a process of differentiation*” (Shaw, 2008, p. 29).

Boundaries are temporal and dynamic in that they are defined at the time according to the purpose for distinguishing a community's existence. Even the boundaries of place based communities are noted to be “*continually recreated, through the interactions and perceptions of local people as they go about their daily lives*” (Cheers & Luloff, 2001, p. 130). They can be endowed in geographical landmarks and waterways to distinguish one township from another. But they are also found in the associated shared meanings and in the identified differences of people's experience of living in a place. Although a boundary may have been marked geographically, its significance is defined by its meaning to the member at the time thus simultaneously affecting identity (Cohen, 1989; Kenny, 2006; Shaw, 2008).

Whatever form boundaries take, they gain their importance from the meaning attributed to them (Cohen, 1982a). As this draws on the individual meanings people associate with community, the understanding of any given community may vary depending on which ‘side’ of the boundary a person sits. Similarly, the meaning and value of community may also vary within a community. Thus

it is in determining how it differs from another community that the common understanding is most apparent.

While a significant focus in the literature is on the boundaries created internally by community members, boundaries can also be imposed externally. The rural boundary classifications used for decision making by government departments determine what substantiates the rural community for the purposes of funding and services. Literature indicates that boundary meanings can be effected by external policy (Brent, 1997; Shaw, 2008). Boundaries identified for funding purposes may differ to those identified through the experience of belonging. Boundaries then, are not fixed entities, but a constant process subject to the different views and meanings of both members and non-members.

This fluid quality of boundaries and its interaction with identity lends support to Blackshaw's conclusions in describing the experience as cleave communities. However, Blackshaw (2010) argues that while Cohen's work has been well received due to the capacity for it to be applied across a range of social formations, it is this apparent strength that is also a weakness of Cohen's theoretical contribution to understanding community. Determining communities through boundaries and differentiation could potentially conclude all forms of social interaction to constitute a community.

Yet Blackshaw's view presupposes that community as a concept must not be bounded by the functional and laymen's use of the term, instead dismissing these appropriations of community as misguided understanding. A less prescriptive approach is to consider community in its plurality of understandings and thus multifaceted existence. For the current study, accepting community as it is used embraces the paradoxes of the complexity of community in the current world, but it requires accommodating the limitation of the conceptual imprecision which Blackshaw sought to resolve.

The preceding discussion highlights the importance of understanding community as a process of interacting and fluid boundaries. These insights were found across literature relating to: ethnic and culture case communities within ethnographic studies, the impact of policy development on

community development (for example, see Shaw, 2008), understanding community cohesion (for example, see Vergunst, 2006) and the workings of 'alternative communities' (Cnaan & Breyman, 2007). Vergunst (2006) points to the need to understand the connection between a) boundaries as they relate to peoples' identification with place based community and b) the associated multiplicity of communities. While the relevance of community boundary processes has been acknowledged within some RCD literature (Cheers, et al., 2003; Cheers & Luloff, 2001; Dixon, Hoatson, & Weeks, 2003a), research relating to community boundary processes within RCD is lacking.

3: 1.4 Community as relational processes

Community then, is multifaceted, understood as more than a site, being *"a frame of reference which is neither map nor territory, but an orientation which emphasises the relationality and contextuality of human practice, in all its messiness"* (Burkett, 2001, p. 237). Whether taking a descriptive or normative approach to community, community encompasses physical and virtual space, organisational and social structures, relationships, shared values and meaning, collective and individual identity, *"and in some ways the forces that affect them all"* (Cnaan, et al., 2007, p. 5). Community can only be understood contextual to its use and the nature of its interconnectedness of all its facets (Brent, 1997; Hodgett & Royle, 2003). Its usefulness exists not as *"an ungrounded theory or hypothesis"* (Brent, 1997, p. 69), but in embracing the breadth and depth of our lived experience of community.

Community as lived, is a paradoxical experience of difference and unity, conflict and harmony, selfishness and mutuality, separateness and wholeness, discomfort and comfort (Burkett, 2001). Brent (1997) suggests this paradox is best understood in the medieval idea of unicity; a term which he considers captures the uniqueness and commonalities, yet also the multiplicity and diversity found within community.

Community in all this complexity can be understood as a relational process where people identify an us-them delineation, that is, apply a boundary to grouping self and others and to which meaning and

values are attributed. This acknowledges the multiplicity of the many uses of the term community and the literature that describes varying types of community. It steers clear of applying value and ideological based definitions of community, and is aligned with a social psychological approach of viewing community through the lens of social identity. This understanding of community underpins the current research.

Conceptualising community in this manner encompasses the fluidity of community as an ongoing process, thereby accommodating the ever changing dynamics, boundaries, identities and meanings found of and in community. This means community research is capturing only a snapshot in time amongst the constantly shifting dynamics. To increase the utility of the research, the current study will focus on processes rather than the details or content of temporal snapshots. By focusing on the processes, findings may be extrapolated from one context to another. As Plant (1974) explains,

To define community functionally is to recognise a plurality of communities, thus a plurality of roles and functions, hence a wide range of rules and authorities. This pluralism enables us to make sense of social criticism in that one set of rules draw from one functional context may be used for the criticism of another. (p. 55)

3: 2. Conceptualising Rural Community

The term rural prefixing community contextualises primarily the type of place within which the process of community transpires. Rural is another term with a history of debated meaning (Bourke & Lockie, 2001; Courvisanos, 2001; Desjardins, et al., 2002; Dukeshire, 2002; Lawrence & Hungerford, 1994; Liepins, 2000; Rios, 1988). Rural community has been understood and conceptualised through quantitative and qualitative perspectives, with the varying approaches affecting community members' lives. Rural community involves both the physical site and the relational community processes occurring within and around that space. This includes all the norms, stereotypes and interrelated activity, both perceived and experienced. These dynamics and experiences are readily apparent within the more obvious physical boundaries of rural communities.

3: 2.1 Rural classification: community boundary and identity processes

Quantitative approaches while useful can be inconsistent in determining rural. When comparing the different approaches it has been demonstrated that they result in different numbers or different people being included as constituting a rural community or population (du Plessis, Beshiri, Bollman, & Clemenson, 2001). There have been a number of quantitative approaches regularly applied to defining rural. At an international level, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development defines rural communities as areas of population densities of less than 150 people per square kilometre (du Plessis, et al., 2001). During the period of selecting and studying RCD projects for this research, in Australia there were three different classification systems utilised predominantly by government departments to categorise rural. Within the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Section of State Structure of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification, rural is defined as settlements with a population of 999 or less (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The Rural Remote and Metropolitan Area (RRMA) classification described three categories of rural: Large rural centres (population 25,000-99,000); Small rural centres (population 10,000 – 24,999); and Other rural areas (population <10,000). These were determined through both population size and 'personal distance', where personal distance relates to the population density of an area and the available opportunities for connectedness (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 1994). The Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) was a sliding scale quantifying remoteness based on the accessibility of services by road (Department of Health and Aged Care Information and Research Branch, 2001).

Externally changing boundaries through the application of different quantitative classifications can have a significant impact on communities, particularly regarding access to funding. For example in Tasmania, residents of small communities on the west coast and islands describe the experience of isolation. Under the classification used prior to 2009 they were eligible to receive and thus accessed a particular funding due to their remote nature. When the government departments changed the classification used, these areas were no longer eligible. The funding was accordingly withdrawn,

reducing the service's accessibility for these areas (researcher's personal practice experience 2010).

Changing classification systems resulted in changed boundaries. It seems in this case the classification previously used reflected the experience of boundaries and identity within the communities more closely than the later system.

Quantitatively determined classifications create boundaries which are determined without reference to people's perception of being rural, or being a community. Given the internal appropriation of community boundaries by members, quantitatively determined boundaries may not reflect the experience of rurality of residents, nor the ideological understanding of rural that has been linked to the discourse associated with the Australian national identity over many years (Bourke & Lockie, 2001). People have their own sense of whether they are 'rural' and quantitative definitions alone do not account for the experience or meaning of being rural (Hugo, Smailes, Macgregor, Fenton, & Brunckhorst, 2001; Rios, 1988). Considering rural through a combination of elements, such as geography, distance, population density, access to services and self-perception (Dukeshire, 2002) provides a more comprehensive definition, capturing the complexity, diversity and reality of rural.

Taking a qualitative perspective, rurality is a multidimensional concept with varying meanings in different contexts (Bourke & Lockie, 2001; Lockie, 2000). In Australia the prominent mental image of rural community is strongly stereotyped with a 'sugar coated' view beholding values of hard work, loyalty, honesty, and close relationships (Finkelstein & Bourke, 2001). These ideals associated with quality of life, are more imposed than descriptive of the experience of rural life (Bourke & Lockie, 2001; Gray & Phillips, 2001; Lawrence & Gray, 2000), yet are part of the understanding of what it means to be rural. They paint an image of Australian rural community life reminiscent of Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies, 1957) and denote a normative view of what 'should' comprise a rural community. By comprehending rural as it is lived and experienced rather than imposing expectations, research can contribute to understanding the community fabric. This includes

acknowledging that it involves an ever changing and heterogeneous space where members and external forces actively shape the communities to which they belong.

The components which make-up the rural space are extremely diverse in their characteristics. An immediate association is farming. However, rural from an occupational viewpoint is additionally understood to include a range of primary industries including forestry, fishing, hunting and mining (Bourke & Lockie, 2001; Lawrence & Gray, 2000). Looking at the changing economic and vocational circumstances within rural areas identifies the role of other occupations such as tourism and hospitality (Bourke & Lockie, 2001). Ecological and sociocultural definitions further capture aspects such as values, demographics and social structures (Dukeshire, 2002; Rios, 1988). Whether taking one or all of these qualitative perspectives, the rural landscape encompasses a multitude of perceptions and experiences.

In creating rural classification systems, recommendations have been made which seek to combine quantitative and qualitative components of rural through further developing and utilising the concept of social catchments. The work of Hugo, Smailes, MacGregor, Fenton and Brunckhorst (2001) presents a process for determining communities through combining population, geography and social connections. Social catchments are based on groupings of households that interact and identify the area as their community, and as such are described as a community of interest (Hugo, et al., 2001). In this manner the concept of social catchments is responsive to the internal appropriation of community boundaries and the associated expression of identity. By embracing the quantitative and qualitative aspects of defining rural, more robust and meaningful spatial units can be identified for social and community planning and policy development (Hugo, et al., 2001; Rios, 1988).

3: 2.2 Rural and non-rural

Rurality is often defined socioculturally, dichotomised with non-rural and more particularly the urban experience (Bourke & Lockie, 2001; Dukeshire, 2002). In studying community processes and

community development, a question to be answered is that of why focus on the rural rather than urban context.

While there are similarities in the issues experienced by rural and urban communities, for example unemployment, poverty, homelessness, problem gambling and drug use (Bourke, 2001a), as described in 2:3.1, there are also demographic, social and economic differences which point to the particular pressures within the rural environment and thus the increasing importance of RCD. Unlike urban communities, many rural communities have experienced declining population which has now begun to stabilise or in a few areas increase. Many rural communities experience the continued out-migration of young people due to reduced local educational and employment opportunities. This has been particularly true for women, thus the resulting demographics compared with urban areas is a population with slightly more men than women, a greater percentage of aged and retired, and a low percentage of young adults (Bourke & Lockie, 2001; Hugo, 2001; Hugo, 2005; Mission Australia, 2006). Likewise, many rural areas experience different challenges to urban areas such as lack of access to many services which impact on the social, physical and psychological well-being of residents; poor access to health, transport and education services and a higher cost of living are common to rural areas (Bourke, 2001a; Mission Australia, 2006). Rural communities thus need individualised focus and research as the solutions will be different in order to respond to these differences in resources, infrastructure, services and population demographics (Bourke & Lockie, 2001). When considering the interaction of community processes and RCD, the implementation of RCD occurs within the context of these pressures, and brings further change within the dynamics of the rural community fabric.

Further, there are community processes which are more strongly apparent as a result of population size and isolation. Rural communities have tighter social networks, with a high proportion of strong connections, and informal networks are key in the flow of information (Bourke, 2001b). The nature of the close social networks of rural communities is frequently summed-up in the adage, *everyone*

knows everyone. As Bourke (2001b) explains, a disruption in a relationship potentially has severe consequences with the capacity to disrupt most social connections. The potential for such repercussion underlies daily social interactions. Conversely, this tight social network can provide strong support when needed.

Values and beliefs described as “*countrymindedness*” where rural residents consider a rural lifestyle to be better than an urban lifestyle, and “*agrarianism*” where farming is seen as honourable and providing for the nation, are strong themes across rural cultures. There are cultural divisions within this rurality, such as those associated with a farming culture in contrast with a rural township culture. Yet these are ameliorated by an “*egalitarianism based on localism*” to ensure the survival of small local community (Gray & Phillips, 2001, p. 55). Given the connectedness of social interactions in small populations, these cultural differences are set aside and people are brought together under the same sense of belonging and rural community identity when for example, defending the community against physical threat, external criticisms, policy decisions or economic changes.

While the diversity in rurality has been emphasised in the previous section and Chapter Two, Gray and Phillips (2001) argue that

“it remains reasonable to discuss rural cultures generically, as long as diversity over space & time is accounted for and care is taken not to subsume particular cultural attributes under assumed, singular, overwhelming culture or rurality.” (p. 53)

The preceding common themes regarding the rural context can thus contribute to developing an understanding of the dynamics of the interaction between community processes and RCD.

Elements of the rural culture and connectedness are not necessarily exclusively rural, however within rural communities these variables have increased significance with greater visibility and prevalence than in urban communities. Likewise, research exploring community identity has found a consistent pattern with small communities being associated with a stronger sense of community identity than larger towns (Puddifoot, 1996). Distinct geographical boundaries have also been found

to promote community identification and engagement (Nowell, et al., 2006; Puddifoot, 1996), an aspect more readily available to rural communities than urban communities. It may often be easier to identify problems affecting rural communities, as well as to identify volunteers, community leaders and accepted community processes (Dixon, Hoatson, & Weeks, 2003b). In this manner, community processes are more clearly expressed in rural communities, thus in studying community processes and CD, the rural context enables ready access to the core issues. The bounded nature of RCD means the effects of CD processes may also be more visible within the community fabric.

The challenges and benefits associated with rural communities as identified in this section and Chapter Two, all interact in CD processes. It is in response to these interacting differences that CD practitioners in rural areas have developed a broad practice field and need a corresponding breadth of skills (Dixon, et al., 2003b). This too distinguishes studying CD in the rural rather than the non-rural context.

Rural, while broad, thus sets the bounds for this community research. To attain a robust understanding of rural community, meaningful both to research and policy, it is important to encompass the physical and relational facets of rural and community. The parameters of rural community for this research encompasses the physically defined space along with the qualitative experience of living within these spaces, with their particular demographics, shifting boundaries and shared history as these interact with the collective entities within, around and intersecting, the community of place. Not only are rural communities under specific pressures and changes, but community processes are often highly visible within the rural context and as such are readily accessible through research in rural communities. These features indicating the significance of rurality provide validation in researching rural community processes as distinct from urban communities. It does not assume, however, that the research findings from rural based research will not have relevance to other communities, particularly where there is a focus on rural communities as a relational process.

3: 3. Community Development

CD is practiced across a range of contexts where-ever improvement is sought for a community. The rural context is thus but one of many environments in which CD theory can be and is applied. The ideological and theoretical context of CD is explored within this section. CD and the implications for RCD are included and explored concurrently, as CD theory is the foundation of CD in the rural environment. This section first defines how community is conceptualised in CD and then examines the principles underpinning policy and practice. The relevance of community theories to CD is then discussed before considering two theories which directly address CD.

The term community development has broad implications. It is used to describe an ideological approach to a purposive change process, a profession and the method and tasks associated with the implementation of all these components (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Cavaye, 2005; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006; Warren 1971). CD encompasses a range of philosophical underpinnings, strategies and methods (Hudson, 2004; Ife, 2002) however, common to the definitions appraised is an understanding that it involves a participatory process of enhancing the quality of life and well-being of members of a community (Brawley, 1994; Cavaye, 2005; Cheers & Luloff, 2001; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006). The term rural community development thus has broad interpretations (Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Kitahara, 1996; Luloff, 1999). RCD as practiced in Australia, Canada, USA, Europe, New Zealand and UK encompasses participatory based economic, social and environmental development (Brawley, 1994; Casswell, 2001; Cavaye, 2001; Cheers, et al., 2002; Kenny, 2006; Summers, 1986). In Australia the emphasis has particularly been upon participation and the development of social and human capital or community capacity building and the sense of community well-being (Cheers, et al., 2002; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005; Sorensen, et al., 2002).

Many CD definitions and writings are conceptually nebulous with an inclination to reduce community to locality with little or no reference to other understandings of the concept

(Bhattacharyya, 2004). Where community is debated, there has been a tendency to polarise local or territorial and functional communities. Local community is seen as determined through geographically defined boundaries, whereas functional community literature focuses on the relational space and social networks. Polarising functional and territorial community appears too segmented for the purposes of CD (Burkett, 2001; Ife, 1995; Puddifoot, 1996). If an understanding of CD is to encompass the complexity of community previously presented in this chapter, the concept is, and needs to be, highly versatile to respond to the breadth of how community is experienced (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Blackshaw, 2010; Shaw, 2008). Accordingly, this research sees the practice of CD as occurring within the inescapable enmeshment of relational and contextual aspects of the experience of community.

In summary, RCD is understood within the current study to be the practice of CD within rural environments. A conceptualisation of CD in the rural context needs to be sufficiently versatile to embrace not only the quantitatively applied boundaries, but also community membership as per the experience of connectedness and identity in the rural space. This research is thus based on a conceptualisation of RCD that encompasses the broad range of practices as afore described, interacting within the context of community as a relational process involving boundaries, identity, meaning and varying experiences, as well as the specific conditions of the rural environment. Interwoven within this dynamic space are the following ideological and theoretical underpinnings of CD.

3: 3.1 Principles and values

Practitioners readily acknowledge that CD is founded upon values (Cavaye, 2001; Kenny, 2006; Warren 1971). Despite the common focus of enhancement or improvement, the source of motivation and the value base for developmental activities vary. Bhattacharyya (2004) argues it is important to differentiate the purpose and role of CD from the methods and strategies utilised in the implementation of CD projects. It is in the purpose where these value differences are most marked.

Values particularly visible amongst CD activities include: the political and economic agendas associated with government funded purposes with the corresponding understandings of CD; the social justice agendas of human autonomy and agency enabling people to determine their existence (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Hudson, 2004; Kenny, 2006; Shaw, 2008); and varying professional foundations of CD practitioners (Ife, 2002; Shaw, 2008).

CD activities are inextricably linked with the political interests associated with the project's funding source and purpose. For over a decade in Australia's recent history, funding through government agencies was particularly associated with neo-liberal policies with a strong focus on economic rationalism and sustainability. Within the past two decades, accountability requirements have moved from a focus on the outputs or activities achieved, to reporting on measurable outcomes within given timeframes. While the political emphasis in social policy may shift with changes in government, the nature of accountability for funding still involves establishing clear goals and outcomes. These outcomes are often based on reference to external expert opinion, and set to be achieved within timeframes guided by financial years or between election years.

The agendas accompanying CD funding may not always match community preparedness nor the time needed to engage strong community participation. This potential incongruity can impact how RCD occurs, particularly in relation to the extent to which a community engages to determine both the project objectives and how they will be achieved. As community engagement requires considerable time and resources, the pressure of attaining requirements imposed top-down means the conceptual approach behind projects tends to lean towards what Taylor, Wilkinson and Cheers (2008) would classify as 'contributions' or 'instrumental' orientations (as described in 2:1) which while involving local community members, have highly specified predetermined outcomes and are directed by professionals not the community.

In contrast, social justice principles are the motivation behind much of the CD literature reviewed. Across these writings there are a range of principles described which fall under the social justice

banner. There is a focus on communities' determining their own needs, meaning systems, solutions to concerns, and pace of development (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006). The social justice agendas underpinning the motivation for CD entail addressing structural disadvantage in the process of seeking a fair distribution of services and resources (Cheers & Luloff, 2001; Ife, 2002) not based on neo-liberal principles of economic rationalism.

Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005)	Ife (2002)	Cheers et al.(2007)	Bhattacharyya (2004)
Holism	<u>Ecological Principles</u> Holism	Community Ownership	Solidarity
Health	Sustainability - <i>systems can be maintained in the long term</i>	Community Control	Agency
Caring	Diversity <i>within and between communities</i>	Community-driven development	Self Help
Compassion	Organic development - <i>in its own unique way</i>		Felt needs
Support for community structures	Integrated development - <i>balance across all dimensions of community</i>	Collective Action	Participation
Respect for diversity	<u>Social Justice Principles</u> Addressing structural disadvantage Addressing discourses of disadvantage Empowerment Need definition - <i>helping communities articulate their needs</i>	Community Participation	
Self-determination	Human rights - <i>protection & promotion</i>	Mobilisation – <i>empowering people to take control over their circumstance & put ideas into action</i>	
Participation	<u>Bottom-up Principles</u> Valuing local knowledge Valuing local culture Valuing local resources Valuing local skills Valuing local processes		
Accountability to oppressed groups	<u>Process principles</u> Process, outcome and vision - <i>balancing all</i> Consciousness raising Participation Co-operation and consensus Pace of development - <i>community determined</i> Peace & non-violence Inclusiveness Community building	Outcomes & process - <i>both important</i>	
	<u>Global Principles</u> Linking the global and local Anti-colonialist practice - <i>not taking over the agenda, devaluing local culture, experience & identity</i>	Community development as an expression of community Comprehensive & culturally appropriate understanding of community	

Table 2: Principles influencing community development

CD is also an emerging profession and the values of community practitioners from a range of backgrounds are a further source of values and agendas in the implementation of RCD. The principles expounded by various authors listed in Table 2 not only demonstrate differing levels of detail, but a complex and differing language drawn from different disciplines for the same or similar concepts. While the principles in each column reflect those in the others, participation is the only term common across them all. Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) encourage community practitioners from a community psychology background to uphold the values underpinned by the psychological orientation of individuals in community/their environment, whereas the principles detailed for the CD profession are drawn from a sociological orientation of understanding how society works. Under the banner of CD, Ife (2002) details 26 principles grouped as relating to the ecological, social justice, 'bottom-up', process and global concerns underpinning CD. These also overlap with each other as seen in, for example, a 'community determined pace of development' being a natural consequence of organic development. Cheers et al (2007) more succinctly lists nine principles which overlap and encompass the detail of Ife's work. Bhattacharyya (2004) summarises the values of CD under the two pursuits of solidarity and agency, describing CD as the development of solidarity and agency through the three key principles of self-help, felt needs and participation. He further suggests that without these underpinning principles, an activity cannot be considered as CD. Principles from this perspective are thus a defining aspect of CD. In all cases, principles and values are acknowledged as paramount. This highlights the significance of values as part of the complex dynamics in RCD. It is therefore important to recognise and manage these within CD research. This issue is addressed later when positioning the current study in CD theory.

For practitioners, a value base which emphasises the importance of the processes of CD projects, can at times sit in tension with a focus on tangible outcomes. Implementing RCD in accord with social justice principles and values is often time consuming, leaving a need for those involved to juggle achieving process integrity and measurable outcomes within short funding timeframes (Kenny, 2006). Thus there are often tensions for RCD practitioners and participants, as they

endeavour to balance competing expectations emanating from the differing orientations of the highly tangible project outcomes and the less tangible yet significant benefits of process within RCD projects. This tension is also related to what is often described as resulting from top-down compared to bottom-up orientations for community projects, or as Summers (1986) describes, “*authoritative*” rather than “*client centred*”. Bottom-up projects are more commonly associated with humanitarian approaches founded on principles of empowerment and agency. A top-down orientation is more often, but not exclusively, found in government and ‘expert’ based projects where the detail and decision making in a community activity is determined for, not by, the community. In the past two decades there have been increased endeavours to blend competing top-down/bottom-up needs and for community development to be based on needs and strategies as identified by communities (Cavaye, 2004; Head, 2007; Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins, 2004; Simpson, Wood and Daws, 2003). Greater community participation has emerged in varying levels of direct engagement of community with government from consultation through to partnership, or via NGOs representing vulnerable people (Cavaye, 2004; Head, 2007). Many government funded programs are now based on models that enable projects to be tailored to community needs and capacity (Cavaye, 2004).

The ideological underpinnings of CD are not unfounded. Development activities have been shown to be more effective when they work with a community’s “*conditions, aspirations, needs, leaders and structures*” (Cheers, et al., 2002, p. 13) (see also Brawley, 1994; Cavaye, 2001; Garlick & Pryor, 2002b). Feedback shows locals strongly believe they should be able to determine their local environment (Hayward, Simpson, & Wood, 2004; Sorensen, et al., 2002). Attitudes within rural communities have been described as involving anger, cynicism and suspicion when development is seen to be driven externally (Cavaye, 2001; Cheers & Hall, 1994). This is in keeping with the bottom-up focus in much of the literature (Cavaye, 2001; Cheers & Hall, 1994; Dudley, Harris, & Henry, 2003; Garlick & Pryor, 2002b; Hayward, et al., 2004; Kenny, 2006; Montero, 2005) that favours basing the drive and control of development in the ‘grass roots’ community and links directly to the principles

of self-direction and agency of a social justice approach. While the value and evidence of the effectiveness of bottom-up approaches is acknowledged within government agencies there remains the struggle to control projects for which they are accountable (Beer, 2000). At times this struggle leads to the requisite of attaining predetermined outcomes based on expert opinion and leaves practitioners to manage the tensions when these prescribed outcomes differ from community expectations (Taylor, et al., 2008).

Practitioners and participants of CD find themselves amid tension and conflicting demands as the agendas and differing ideology from political, professional and individual sources interact in the implementation of RCD projects. This is again an example of RCD as a process of interacting forces which are in a constantly engaging and shaping each other (Hudson, 2004). However, while practice values and motivations may differ in their particular emphasis, common foundational values are found in the belief in the capacity for community to provide a significant arena for people to engage in social life in a particular manner, and that such engagement is an important aspect of both individual and societal well-being (Kenny, 2006; Puddifoot, 1996).

Principles and values are therefore an integral factor in the practice of CD. Across varying contexts CD inhabits a contradictory province between top-down and bottom-up paradigms. This value based space of competing agendas, contradictions and paradoxes experienced by all participating (including funders, practitioners and community members) are part of the relational processes of the community fabric and thus CD. Consequently, theories directly addressing CD practice will be most accessible if they can cross the barriers of the various uses, practices and philosophical value bases. A challenge taken up for the current research is to address the areas of interest in a manner that can be utilised across the sphere of RCD amongst the tensions between the ideological and practical undertakings.

3: 3.2 Theory and community development

There are a range of theories and philosophical approaches found in the field of community studies, all of which provide a ground within which CD interplays. Theories regarding human and societal interaction, while not developed directly regarding CD, are pertinent to the field. Similarly, studies that provide insight into the workings and dynamics of community are also relevant. More recently, there have been theoretical frameworks developed to directly address the complexity of CD.

The history of changing foci within community and rural community studies is well documented in community oriented literature (for example see Cnaan, et al., 2007; Kenny, 2006; Lockie, 2001).

These discussions identify that there have been a variety of approaches and perspectives, encompassing social structure, systems and networks, power in relationships, meaning in and of community, and the lived experience of being in community. Some of the theoretical underpinnings of CD are found within theories on how society works. These include Marxism, feminism, social movement theory, liberal theory, social interactionism, and post-modernist theoretical perspectives (Kenny, 2006). In psychology fields, stress and coping theories such as Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources and Lazarus and Folkman's model of community change, have been applied to understand change processes in communities (Kelly & Steed, 2004). Research in the area of community psychology is applicable, studying people within the context of their environment so to facilitate individual and collective change. Community psychology is founded on an ecological model where change in any level (individual, micro, meso and macro) affects the entire system (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Similarly the fields of group dynamics and leadership have relevance to CD. The range of theories from different disciplines is the broad backdrop for understanding how community works, and is part of the landscape within which RCD takes place. But these theories do not necessarily detail the dynamics associated with the immediate interaction of daily CD practice, particularly in a rural context. As such they do not directly address the broader impact of RCD on the community fabric.

The diversity of disciplines involved in CD has often resulted in the knowledge remaining isolated within each discipline, rather than informing each other. This has served to increase the difficulty of applying relevant knowledge and theory to RCD as it requires crossing the “*disciplinary barriers*” of language and focus of analysis (Luloff, 1999, p. 314). Yet, practitioners identify the need to work with and learn across the discipline boundaries in undertaking RCD (Stehlik, 2001). Within the current study, the endeavour will be to draw knowledge from across a range of disciplines, and analyse and interpret the findings in a manner which can inform CD across these varying fields of practice.

Common themes emerge from amongst relevant theories. These themes relate to the role of social engagement and interaction in the formation and constant shaping of meaning, and the manner in which these are intertwined with individual and collective identity. Theories such as social interactionism and Luhman’s theory of self-referential social systems map how relational processes affect the creation of meaning and the establishment and shaping of identity (Burkett, 2001; Connell, 2002; Kenny, 2006). Identities are not static constructs but are constantly formed in a reflexive process through verbal and non-verbal engagement with others. These interchanges in the context of community, contribute to both individual and collective identity. Understanding the connection between identity and its interface in development processes is essential within CD as their effect on each other points to the broader reaching impact of CD on the community fabric.

Bhattacharyya (2004) argues that CD is about actively building a collective or shared identity which is sufficiently enabled to provide members with autonomy and self-determination. Identity, from this perspective is not just an interactive component in CD, but the core focus. This collective or community identity is about shared values, culture and symbolic meanings, and the establishment of associated norms (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Cnaan, et al., 2007; Colombo & Senatore, 2005; Hunter, 2007). Further, research suggests that a strong sense of collective identity positively affects CD (Reisch & Guyet, 2007). The interrelationship between identity and CD is therefore an important

consideration in the formation of theory regarding CD. As previously discussed, these dynamics are particularly heightened within the bounded context of rural communities and are thus of particular importance in research on RCD processes.

Theory regarding community boundaries is also related to identity and working in communities. CD has always involved boundary negotiation; that is, understanding and working with the boundaries shaping community identity, and the membership by individuals to a multiplicity of communities (Dixon, et al., 2003a). Individuals in the process of identifying with a number of communities may maintain a number of varying identities (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Kenny, 2006). These are highlighted in the negotiating of community boundaries and the 'self' or 'other' appointment of community 'membership'. The identities of individuals both inform and are informed by the community identities with which they connect, and entail navigating the boundaries associated with each community. In this manner, the nature of cleave communities and the fluidity of boundaries and identity as described previously, provide both the foundational context of CD as well as the interacting dynamics that will influence CD processes. This community fabric is simultaneously being shaped by the CD interaction.

While such theory provides a foundation for understanding the functioning of society and community, there has been a missing link between these theoretical approaches and the daily realities of RCD practices. In response to this, various models and frameworks have been developed which identify the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings for practice in the profession of CD.

Ife (2002) articulates a framework for community work, placing his approach clearly within ecological and social justice perspectives before developing an integrated practice model based within this approach. In arguing that ecological and social justice perspectives are core to CD work, the framework has strong ideological undertones. From the ecological perspective, CD is founded in holism, sustainability, diversity and equilibrium. Ife defines holism as being respectful of all life, rejecting linear solutions, and instead seeking organic change. A sustainable approach he describes

as anti-capitalist, seeking conservation through reduced consumption and an economy that is not founded on growth. Embracing diversity involves valuing choice, difference and multiple solutions. Equilibrium looks for balance in all things, for example in both rights and responsibilities, and in both the global and local picture. Ife outlines a social justice perspective in CD as seeking to empower those who are disempowered particularly through structural or institutional circumstance or through a dominant discourse.

Ife endeavours to encapsulate the complexity of CD through six dimensions: social, economic, political, cultural, environmental and personal/spiritual. Practitioners are considered to work within these dimensions guided further by 26 principles of CD (see Table 2), and actioned through facilitative, educational, technical and representational roles. Similarly, Kenny (2006), summarises a range of philosophical value bases, highlights social justice as an underpinning perspective, establishes social interactionism as a guiding theory, and then describes what CD practitioners do in response to this value and theory base. These models provide a clear connection between theory and practice in CD.

The approaches of Ife and Kenny meet Bhattacharyya's (2004) expectation of a theory of CD, in that the concept is defined, and the practice characteristics are clearly established. Bhattacharyya argues that theory in the area of CD is not theory as associated with physical sciences that provides explanation, but alternatively what he describes as democratic theories in that they "*elaborate a vision of a kind of social order*", and in the case of CD also the methodology to achieve it (Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 10). Although providing a theoretical foundation for understanding CD, these works also detail strong ideological underpinnings as determining reason for the existence of CD. This is true across the CD arena where, as Ritchie, Parry, Gnich and Platt (2004) succinctly summarise,

"The overt ideological agenda of community development is to remedy inequalities and to achieve better and fairer distribution of resources for communities. This is achieved ideally through participatory processes and bottom-up planning." (p. 51)

The values and principles associated with the ideological motivations for CD become a benchmark for ascertaining appropriate practice (methods and techniques), along with research addressing best practice.

So, while work such as Ife and Kenny's encompass the complexities of community and CD and build clear links between theory and practice, these perspectives are underpinned by a strong normative and philosophical approach regarding a preferred functioning of community. In this manner the strength it has in its connection to a strong foundation, becomes a potential limitation to responding to the versatile nature of community and its interaction with CD activity, by the quest for what 'should be' potentially overshadowing what is actually occurring within the processes of CD projects. Similarly, if "*democratic theories*" are to offer methodology to achieve a particular "*social order*", it would seem necessary to first understand how the current order functions. Thus while CD includes ideologically founded theory, an understanding of existing community functioning needs to first be found through theory developed from research utilising as much as is possible, value free enquiry, not directed by a value laden mission.

Cheers and Luloff (2001) took a more empirical approach to RCD theory, when applying Wilkinson's (1970a) Community Interaction Theory (CIT) to CD in rural place based communities. Concentrating on social patterning, CIT is founded on community as only existing where there is social interaction which is focused on the well-being of the collectivity. In relation to rural communities CIT purports that place based communities consist of three components: locality, local society and community field. Locality defines the space, and is subject to the boundary processes as afore described. Local society refers to the social life and structural systems and the associated relational processes (eg class, gender, factions) within the locality. Community field is the collective actions responding to local issues and thus this defines the collective as a community through interaction and activity towards the interests of the whole. In this manner CIT highlights some of the components and functioning of the community fabric.

The concept of strong and weak ties as defined by Granovetter (Granovetter, 1973; Taylor, et al., 2008) to describe the connectedness of a community has been combined with CIT to further build theory for community work. Strong ties are related to high levels of interaction between people that involve both emotional intensity and reciprocity. Weak ties involve only occasional interaction between people. Putnam (2000) likened these ties to the concepts of 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital, where bonding relates to the strong ties which build solidarity, and bridging refers to weak ties that link across "diverse social cleavages" within and beyond place based community. The concept of 'linking' social capital has been used to describe the ability to link with external agencies to access resources or influence policy (Pretty, 2003). The fabric of rural communities is characterised by frequent strong connections.

Warren's (cited in Cheers, et al., 2007; Taylor, et al., 2008) concept of horizontal and vertical patterns of interaction based in social systems theory further contributes to understanding community processes, particularly regarding collectivities in a place based community. Horizontal patterns are those interactions involving the relationships between collectives such as social clubs, and between individuals within family and neighbourly exchanges. Vertical patterns describe the connections from within the community to outside systems and structures. Relating these to social capital, while horizontal patterns may involve bonding and bridging linkages, vertical ties appear to involve bridging and linking social capital.

Another framework that contributes to understanding the patterns of social relations in community and connects these with community action is described as entrepreneurial social infrastructure (ESI) (Flora, 1998; Flora, Sharp, Flora, and Newlon, 1997; Flora and Flora, 1993). In this model, the three elements of symbolic diversity, resource mobilisation and quality of networks (Flora and Flora 1993) provide a foundation for "*developing organisational forms that encourage collective action to achieve tangible goals*" (Flora, 1998, p. 489). Symbolic diversity involves accepting controversy by focusing on community processes and thus depersonalising politics. Resource mobilisation involves

investment both by individuals and as a collective. Building on the concept of horizontal and vertical ties, the ESI framework involves developing both thus strengthening both bonding and bridging social capital to provide the necessary resourcing including skills and knowledge.

These theories regarding ties and patterns of interaction provide a framework for understanding the strength, direction and function of relationship and connections both within community and across community boundaries to other social systems. ESI further provides a framework for managing the social infrastructure that would be associated with progressing community development. By including these understandings with CIT, Cheers et al (2007) provide insight to comprehend the quality of linkages in the functioning of local society, despite the ongoing fluidity with all its interrelationships, between for example, kin, socioeconomic classes, cultures, and groups. This provides a foundation for understanding the environment and processes of community development activity.

In response to CIT and rural communities, Cheers and Luloff (2001) identified:

“Rural community development involves building, developing and/or promoting the community field – strengthening interlinking processes, intensifying community agency and increasing the frequency of community actions and interactions in other social fields. It occurs as members of various social fields interact with one another on projects and issues that transect interest lines. Such linkages are critical in that they help transform the focus from interest specific concerns to those of the larger whole, consequently contributing to the improvement of the general quality of life of local citizens.” (p. 132)

This depiction provides a clear understanding of the positioning of RCD within community processes. It highlights that the interaction and linking of social fields (as part of the community field) is central to RCD.

These interactions could also be conceptualised by means of boundary processes, as the different collective identities engage across their different interests to achieve the broader interest. From this perspective, a significant component of the relational processes of RCD is negotiating across the

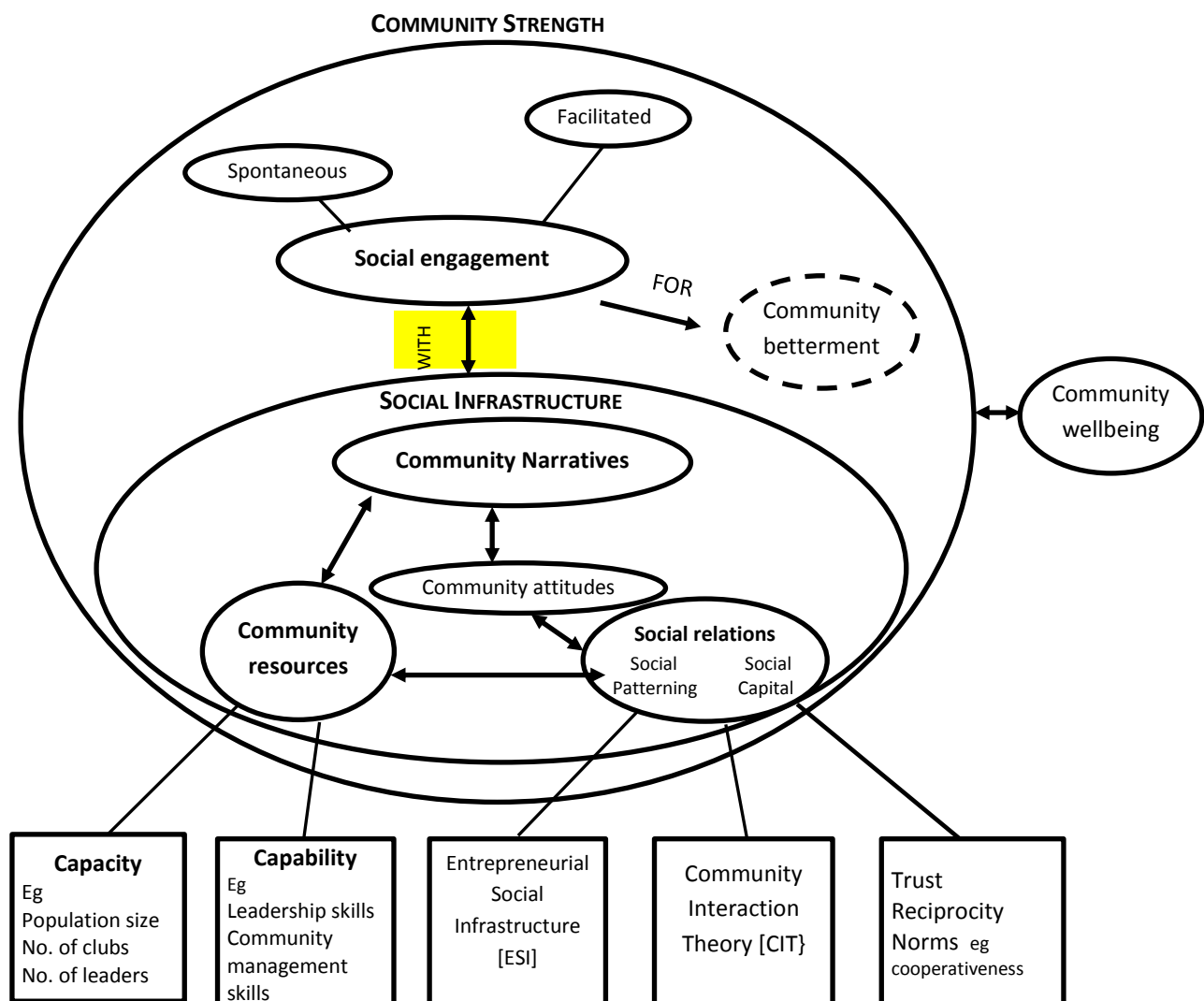
boundaries of the social fields within a place based community. If RCD processes are largely about engaging boundary processes in community, further research is needed to understand what these boundary processes are and how they work within the varying frameworks being developed for RCD.

Cheers et al (2003) further saw that the field lacked a common framework which encapsulated the complexity of community and contributed to understanding the collective effect of community. They also ascertained there was very little theory and research directly responding to the rural community context. To address these concerns, they embarked on a multidisciplinary study to understand how rural people construct community and to develop a comprehensive framework for the field of community work. They argue within this research that community itself is an actor within community dynamics; that the shared norms and capacity for collective action is not solely due to individuals. They point to a range of concepts such as community capacity, community cohesion and social capital as all describing a component of community which comprises an integrative function that exists apart from individuals. This was initially termed "*the community factor*".

The subsequent findings involved the development of a model of community strength which also serves to map the components of CD. Participants used "*community strength*" when describing the activity of communities so this term replaced community factor. Community strength is also presented as interchangeable with CD, with both being about people (encompassing groups and organisations) in a locality engaging with each other and the community social infrastructure, for the betterment of community (Cheers, et al., 2007; Cheers, et al., 2003).

Referring to Figure 1, the model of community strength involves facilitated or spontaneous collective action for community benefit, engaging with the social infrastructure. The social infrastructure includes community narratives, community attitudes, community resources, and social relations. 'Community narratives' are the stories told within communities about community life and experiences, and sustain the community's identity. 'Community attitudes' are the shared views

within communities about various issues and 'community resources' includes the capacities and the capability to utilise them. 'Social relations' involves the links which exist between people as well as the social capital. Social capital within this model describes how the connections interact (Cheers, et al., 2003). Social relations are understood through CIT combined with the conceptualisation of the strength and direction of connections. These are then managed through ESI in progressing CD



activity. For a more detailed explanation and application of the model see Cheers et al (2007).

Figure 1: Community strength (Cheers, et al., 2007, pg 65)

The same research project also involved developing a tool to measure community capacity. This provides a mechanism for communities to identify existing capacity and opportunities for

development. Both the model and the audit tools are soundly based in theory and empirical research relating to rural communities. Further, the tool provides a clear path linking CD practices with theory. In this manner it addresses some of the deficiencies in RCD literature. Yet, within this work, the motivation remains ideologically founded upon *“the belief that people have the right to determine their own collective aspirations and how they achieve them”* (Cheers, et al., 2007, p. 62) and the framework is underpinned by a normative definition of community as requiring face to face interaction and care for place and each other.

There are a number of practice frameworks which provide ‘how to’ or ‘good practice’ steps for facilitating CD work. Taylor et al (2008) highlight five of these as sufficiently detailed for the direct application to community practice. Of these, only two are developed from research within rural communities. One is the interactional CD model based on community strength. The other is a framework for participative development based on agricultural development projects primarily in developing countries. This model sets out the essential components of the ‘what’, ‘who’ and ‘how’ of participative development, including assessing the context and evaluating the project.

Clearly while there is RCD research emerging with sound theoretical and empirical foundations, these are limited in number. The focus of CD theory and its application is the development of processes to effect particular and ideologically driven change in community. This focus does not respond to the quandary of what happens within the fabric of the community during RCD that results in unintentional outcomes. Although they acknowledge the relational complexity, these approaches do not offer theory about boundary processes as side effects of RCD.

Thus CD practice is influenced by both ideology and theory. CD is inextricably connected to values founded in social justice, which can create tensions with competing funding agendas and requirements. Current CD practice is informed by these strong ideological underpinnings as well as theoretical understandings of community and social functioning. Research and theory broadly addressing social interaction and community indicate that identity and boundaries are an important

aspect for consideration in CD processes. Theory regarding CD practice has been more directly addressed over the past decade to start to build stronger connections between theory and practice. The resultant models are girded by social justice perspectives and have strong theoretical foundations upon which clear practice characteristics and tools can be established. Similarly they provide the groundwork from which further community and RCD research continues. These theories are focused on CD processes creating purposive change, and although acknowledging boundaries, do not clearly address the broader impact on the community fabric, by describing community boundary processes and how they work within these frameworks.

3: 4. Research Opportunity

This section briefly summarises key points of the theoretical context of CD, so to highlight the gaps in our understanding of RCD. These gaps establish the opportunity for further research and more specifically the research questions guiding this study.

For many years, literature on CD was predominantly practice focused, often providing analysis of specific projects and of the activities in accordance with the objectives of the project (Brawley, 1994). While CD literature and professionals acknowledge the significance of the complexity of relationships within RCD activity, the focus tended to be on achieving the goals of the specific development or measuring the quality of relationships such as trust and co-operation in achieving project objectives.

Similarly there are writings regarding project implementation and management involving good practice principles which identify the importance of leadership, social capital, broad community consultation, responding to the existing community, clear goals and expectation, a shared vision, allowing time, good communication, trust, ongoing evaluation and improvement and celebration (Brawley, 1994; Cavaye, 2005; Cheers, et al., 2002; Department of Transport and Regional Services, 2003; Forde, 2001; Garlick & Pryor, 2002b; Joint Work Group, 2004; Kilpatrick, Jones, & Barrett,

2004; Nissen, et al., 2005; Sorensen, et al., 2002). Yet, this practice focus often lacked a clear theoretical foundation and was difficult to generalise across disciplines, leading Burkett (2001: 233) to conclude that *“the contemporary context of community practice remains theoretically underdeveloped”*. As well as a need to connect theory and practice within CD (Burkett, 2001; Ife, 2002; Moseley, 1997), there was a need for an understanding of community that encompasses the relational and spatial aspects in all their paradoxical processes and forms (Liepins, 2000).

Research has been needed to address the ambiguity and complexity of community in relation to RCD so to comprehensively inform RCD processes. Given the breadth of disciplines influencing and influenced by RCD, the current research draws from literature and theory across a number of disciplines. In particular, literature has been studied from the fields of psychology, sociology, social policy, human services, anthropology, small group studies and rural studies in geography. Such a multidisciplinary approach is also taken by other researchers in the area of community studies (Cheers, et al., 2003; Cnaan, et al., 2007; Luloff, 1999) acknowledging that while at times difficult to combine the different focus of analysis, each field contributes to the knowledge base for community work and are thus an important consideration in developing an holistic understanding of community (Domahidy, 2003; Stehlik, 2001). Based on the extent of RCD practice, any theory explicitly responding to RCD will also be most accessible to practitioners and participants if it can be applied across the disciplinary barriers of differing language, conceptual and practice approaches, and the varying orientation in values and philosophical underpinnings.

The necessity for a conceptual understanding that addresses community in a holistic manner is acknowledged in literature seeking to develop frameworks for CD (see Burkett, 2001; Cheers, et al., 2003; Liepins, 2000). Theory in the area of CD needs to embrace the complexity of community previously discussed. Specifically for RCD this involves the ever changing and paradoxical experience of community as a relational process, associated with the physically yet fluidly bounded space of a

community of place, intersected by the plurality of community forms and the shifting meanings of them all.

Common across the literature is the idea of enhancement of quality of life and building capacity for this to be maintained (Brawley, 1994; Cavaye, 2001; Cheers & O'Toole, 2001; Dudley, et al., 2003; Hudson, 2004; Ife, 2002; Kelly & Steed, 2004; Kenny, 2006; Shaw, 2008). Such goals, and the strong ideological agendas within CD literature engender the risk of theory and research focused on what 'should' be happening, thus limiting the capacity to interpret what is actually happening within the dynamics of CD projects. As development encapsulates a goal orientation, much of the RCD literature responds to this with a focus on the processes and structures of working towards the goal. In this manner, CD theory provides an understanding of how to facilitate change within communities. Applying the holistic conceptualisation of community means sustained enhancement requires consideration of both the processes of community and their interaction with the internal processes of being human; the relationship between community and individual psyche (Burkett, 2001). This means it is also important to understand how communities are affected by the processes of CD. Research is lacking which addresses the processes of community as they interact with RCD and simultaneously accounts for the relational and identity connections.

Further, while CD theories founded in ideological thought provide insight in facilitating change for communities, understanding how community processes are affected as they interact with CD needs to be developed without being limited by philosophical expectations. For theory development to inform the quandary presented in 1:1, there is a need for research which steps back from the ideologies of community and CD, to first identify what is happening on the ground. Theory developed in this manner can then be applied across a range of ideological perspectives as well as across the multitude of disciplines in the arena of CD.

In the past decade in Australia there has been some work towards establishing a clear and comprehensive framework of RCD. The work of both Ife (2002) and Cheers et al (2003) are examples

that directly address these needs. Their models provide clear frameworks for CD work, yet both are based on normative foundations of what community should be. At the same time, Cheers et al (Cheers, et al., 2003; Cheers & Luloff, 2001) also demonstrated the need for more knowledge regarding rural community processes in their research and model development on how a strong community field is produced.

There is still a gap in understanding the workings of the community boundary processes in relation to the implementation of RCD activities. From the perspective of the community strength model, this relates to the space where the development activities interact with the social infrastructure. These processes are represented by the “with” arrow highlighted in Figure 1. The model identifies the components and relationships associated with the community strength that CD seeks to build. In this manner it provides a framework for how RCD facilitates change, building the frequent community actions that it also seeks to sustain. However it does not specifically address or fully explain the interaction of CD processes with community processes, and so does not provide theory which addresses the quandary instigating the current study.

Understanding how RCD interacts with the community fabric has the potential to further inform the capacity to not only build a strong community field, but to also prevent negative impacts on the fabric of the community. Such understanding could enable CD participants to manage for example, process inhibitors of a strong community field. While it is not appropriate to develop one set formula for the doing of RCD (Cavaye, 2005; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006), if we can better understand the processes of the community fabric as they interact with RCD, practitioners and participants can be further informed about the dynamics which they navigate and in turn, influence.

The interactional CD literature reviewed, discussed the dynamic role of community boundaries in relation to the locality aspect of community and the attribution of various meanings creating a community of place within a physical space. The description of RCD as developing a strong community field generated by the interaction of people from across a range of social fields, further

suggests that community boundary processes play a part in the implementation of RCD. It is likely that each of these fields have associated boundaries to be negotiated. If the concept of CD is synonymous with community strength the process of RCD inherently involves engaging community boundary processes, and thus the role of boundaries in CD is significant.

Boundaries in community have been identified and applied in various community studies, however, they appear to receive minimal attention in RCD research. It is understood that RCD involves working within the boundaries shaping rural community identity and the multiple identities of community members, all of which are part of the fabric of community. But the literature does not directly address the interaction of RCD processes and community boundary processes in relation to the community fabric. As Vergunst (2006) argues,

“if we understand where the boundaries [of the varying forms of community] are placed between ‘us and them’ in rural localities, we will understand the mechanisms for inclusion and exclusion” (p. 8)

which influence interactions within rural communities. Similarly, just as it has been demonstrated that external policy impacts boundaries and meaning for communities (Brent, 1997; Shaw, 2008), it is conceivable that RCD implementation processes impact boundaries and meaning within the fabric of the community through the interaction of internal community meanings with the external influences of a project and the ensuing dynamics. These in turn would have implications for individuals and collectives in the construction and reconstruction of the fabric of the community.

3: 4.1 Research interest

Throughout all that has been reviewed, it is clear that RCD is very much about interactive processes of community and its relationships in all their complexity. As the content of the structures, networks, expectations, values and meanings of community are constantly changing, it is a useful to explore the processes of community; the way community is shaped, and reshaped. There is a contribution to be made by stepping back from the detail of roles and associated goal orientated

processes of CD, to increasing the understanding of the processes of community as they occur with RCD.

This brief overview of community, CD and RCD conceptualisation and theory sets the scene within which this study emerges. The focus of this research then, is on the dynamic processes actively interacting within RCD as a project or activity is implemented. These interactive processes potentially shape a projects course and affect individuals and the fabric of the community, as their identity and meaning are in turn shaped by the interaction.

Within RCD the complexity of relationships is acknowledged as significant. The interweaving of these complex relationships comprise the fabric of the community within which RCD occurs and which RCD also affects in ways unintended within RCD project outcomes. As Sharma (2005, p. 6) points out, “*one man’s purposive change is another man’s crecscive change*”. This research focuses beyond RCD project objectives to the dynamic and complex relationships of the community as they interact in response to, and around RCD project implementation. It seeks to provide an understanding of the processes involved in how RCD interacts with the fabric of a rural community, acknowledging but not based on ideological expectations.

As the literature reviewed points to rural community as a relational process involving the ongoing development of meaning, identity and boundaries, the current study will need to first explore how community is understood by those involved in RCD. The study can then search out how the community processes of boundaries and identity interact with RCD processes. The questions guiding the research could thus be expressed as:

How do the processes of boundaries, identity and meaning associated with rural community development implementation, impact the fabric of rural communities? That is, how are rural communities transformed by the process of RCD beyond the changes directly related to project objectives?

Chapter Four: Research Strategy

Chapter Four contains a discussion of the methodology chosen for the research. It outlines the research design, the data collection and analysis, and reviews the limitations of the process. The chapter closes with some examples of how data is presented in the findings chapters, and defines some key terms as used in the following chapters.

4: 1. Methodology

The research questions focus on exploring the processes by which the interactive dynamics behind the implementation of rural community development (RCD) projects affect individuals and the collective fabric of the community. In this manner, the current study seeks to contribute to the development of theory to increase understanding of the dynamics of RCD. Principles of naturalistic enquiry, qualitative research and grounded theory informed the approach for the current study, as these have been demonstrated to be effective in studying and generating theory regarding people's experiences and perceptions. The approach taken was drawn from the descriptions and discussions of grounded theory found in the writings of Cresswell (1998), Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005), Patton (Patton, 1990), Dick (2002), Borgatti (2005), Charmaz (2000), Glaser (2002) Suddaby (2006) Bowen (2008) and Patton (1990), and was guided by a range of community research projects.

The current study falls within the interpretive paradigm of naturalistic enquiry in that it is concerned with how a social phenomenon (RCD processes' effect upon the rural community fabric) is constituted, experienced and interpreted. The sources which inform the research interest are found in people's experiences and perceptions, individually and collectively, of processes as they occur. Previous researchers have explored the deficiencies of a positivist and empiricist approach in handling the entangled and often paradoxical interaction of social experience (Cresswell, 1998; Ife, 2002). A naturalistic enquiry approach to research involves studying human phenomena in their

natural setting rather than manipulating situations to test hypotheses (Bowen, 2008; Cresswell, 1998). The focus is on exploring, understanding and documenting process and variations of experience and outcomes (Patton, 1990). Although quantitative methods can be employed within this research ontology, due to the nature of social enquiry there is a predominance of qualitative methods. Research approaches characteristic of naturalistic enquiry include inductive analysis, grounded theory, case study reporting, discourse analysis and narrative inquiry (Bowen, 2008; Cresswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). In contrast with the once dominant scientific paradigm emphasising objectivity in measuring verifiable phenomena (Ife, 1995; Willig, 2001), such qualitative approaches are subject to the interpretation of both the research participants and the researcher (Mason, 2002).

The research questions also set the focus on illuminating what is happening with the phenomena without predetermining what exists. Accordingly, the method embraced is emergent, responding to findings in the data throughout the process, and further, denotes a grounded theory approach, generating theory as it emerges from the data. Grounded theory has been described as

“a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed. Theory evolves during actual research and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 273 cited in Bowen, 2008)

Rather than research to test theory, the primary purpose of grounded theory research is the generation of theory regarding human social processes directly from the data, through systematic analysis.

While it has been argued that grounded theory can, and indeed should be implemented and understood from an objectivist viewpoint (Glaser, 2002), it has also been reformulated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and further interpreted across the spectrum from objectivist to constructivist and realist to relativist (Charmaz, 2000). Each of these variations, provide a systematic approach to the

analysis of qualitative data, and these approaches have been reviewed and synthesized under the assumption that grounded theory can continue to be refined and evolved (Eaves, 2001).

Although there appears to be conflicting guidelines regarding specific procedures within grounded theory, common across these writings is that grounded theory involves

“an organic process of theory emergence based on how well data fit conceptual categories identified by an observer, by how well the categories explain or predict ongoing interpretations and by how relevant the categories are to the core issues being observed.”
(Suddaby, 2006, p. 634).

This is a process of constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, and developing theory as it emerges from the concepts within the strengthening categories. Sensitising concepts are accepted by some as valid in providing a point of reference to orient the development of theory. It could also be reasoned that an observer would already be sensitive to issues which they have encountered in both professional and personal life experience and thus bring this lens to the analysis process. Data analysis involves systematic coding and comparison of new data with previous data and coding, and the emerging theory. These continue until no new concepts are being added from the new data, and similarly, no new coding categories emerge; frequently understood as data and theoretical saturation. Given the richness of qualitative data, saturation too has a human factor in reaching limits to identify new concepts. As the process is emergent, the sampling, data collection, and analysis and the development of theory occur concurrently.

Charmaz (2000, p. 510) argues that the systematic analysis does not require following a set of prescriptive instructions, but instead grounded theory methods *“move each step of the analytic process toward the development, refinement, and interrelation of concepts”*. From this premise the current research is guided by the agreed preceding features drawn from a range of experience in using grounded theory.

Qualitative approaches and grounded theory have been accepted and used in community research. For example, Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) in their community psychology text include grounded theory as one of the approaches under the heading of 'Foundations of Community Research'. A number of community studies have used qualitative methodologies and grounded theory to study community processes, rural community understandings and community development.

For example, Falk and Fitzpatrick (2000) utilised qualitative approaches in their research to understand "*the nature of the interactive productivity between the local networks in a rural community*" (p. 93). They described the methodology as using principles of grounded theory, and ethnographic techniques within a whole-community case study. As with much qualitative research, the sampling was purposive, identifying thirty-four community leaders across a range of socio-demographic variables to participate in an interview, then recording their spontaneous conversations in the community over a day, and maintaining a diary of their interactions. While the research is described as being founded on grounded theory principles in that it is both theory and indicator generating, the starting point is the assumptions to be tested by the research. In this way the research appears not to follow a key aspect of generating theory from the ground without imposing preconceived directions. Similarly, it is not obvious whether the grounded theory components of sampling to saturation and constant comparative analysis were included. Thus the methodology as explained in the article, while qualitative and contributing to theory regarding community processes in rural communities, does not follow some aspects of a grounded theory approach. However, the research shows the successful application of qualitative methods in developing theory regarding the relationship between individual interactions and social capital. With regard to the current study, it demonstrates the relevance of these approaches (including purposive sampling, and transcripts of interviews and conversations as a data source) for understanding the complex dynamics of rural community.

The recent work of Cheers et al (Cheers, et al., 2003), utilised a grounded theory, iterative and multidisciplinary approach for research developing theory regarding community processes. Like the current research, the goal was to inform RCD, but the targeted interest was in developing a comprehensive framework for a sociological understanding of the 'community factor' based in both how rural communities construct community, and current community literature. Data was first collected from the literature and analysed using the concept of a community factor as a sensitising concept. This resulted in sixty-eight concepts or frameworks which informed understanding of the community factor. From these, a rudimentary framework for the community factor was developed. The research processes were overlaid, such that the literature review informed continued appraisal as well as the coinciding interpretive research in the field.

The field work initially aimed to choose one community for in-depth study, however two communities were chosen, based on findings from the first round of observations in five communities and interviews in one. In-depth interviews with residents, local documents, a focus group and observations from joining the social life of the communities were the sources of data. Interviews and the focus group discussions were guided by a small number of questions aimed at participants telling their stories. All were taped, transcribed and analysed using a qualitative analysis software application. Analysis of the field research provided the refinement of the framework, founded on the concept of community strength as it was understood by rural community residents. Using the community strength framework as the foundation, a tool to facilitate community development was also developed.

Cheers et al's (2003) research demonstrates the relevance of an iterative grounded theory approach informed by researchers from across a range of disciplines, for understanding community processes. It is an example of drawing concepts from varying data sources until key concepts evolve as an emergent theory, and changing data collection plans during the research to better capture the emerging concepts. Likewise, it shows how interviews, focus groups and document reviews are used

to access relevant sources for understanding people's experience of community. Some of the methods of data collection within this comprehensive research project are also utilised in the current study. These particularly relate to the multidisciplinary input and emergent design, engaging people's perceptions through loosely structured interviews, local documents, and observation, and utilising grounded theory to inform data analysis and collection.

Bowen's (2008) research note describing the detail of a grounded theory study of community-based antipoverty projects, more explicitly demonstrates operationalising sensitising concepts, constant comparative analysis and the process of saturation involved in grounded theory as applied in community work. Bowen consciously drew sensitising concepts (citizen participation, social capital and empowerment) from a review of the literature and created a conceptual framework regarding these to guide theory formulation. However care was taken in the data collection and analysis to not impose these concepts but to let new concepts arise.

Thirty-four in-depth interviews were sampled across eight projects, with further non-participant observation, and document reviews. Eight of these interviews were added later in the process, to aid constant comparison with the data from an initial sample of twenty-six interviews. In this manner theoretical sampling was applied, continually informing the emerging theory through sampling until saturation. The data was collected and analysed concurrently using constant comparative analysis in reviewing line, sentence and paragraphs of the transcripts and field notes. Through open coding, and assigning and revising codes utilising a qualitative analysis software application to manage the data, fifty-six categories were generated. This continued into axial coding drawing the codes into categories that were interpretive rather than descriptive, followed by selective coding by connecting and consolidating axial codes and finally identifying core categories across the themes. What emerged was a theory that stakeholder collaboration in development increases productivity of resources and generates the conditions to enable community-driven development.

Bowen's description of constantly moving back and forth between data and categories, checking and rechecking the codes and concepts to identify concepts that appeared to be clustered, details the process of discovering theoretical properties in the data. Again, interviews arise as an important source of data, supported by observation and document analysis. He also emphasises the related processes of theoretical sampling and comparative analysis, continuing until saturation is achieved. With regard to the current research interest, this study again demonstrates the relevance of a grounded theory approach to enhance understanding community development processes and highlights the specific analytic processes and data collection methods successfully used to build theory grounded in the data. These provide a guide for the current study.

Naturalistic inquiry and qualitative approaches utilising grounded theory have been chosen for the current study, having been demonstrated to be effective in studying people's experience and perceptions and generating related theory. As such the following section, which describes the design and methods used, follows the example of the cited research.

4: 2. Research Design

The approach for the research design was determined by the processes of grounded theory. In this manner data was collected in conjunction with and in response to the analysis of earlier data, and data analysis involved a constant comparative process to identify theoretical concepts. These were approached pragmatically, endeavouring to utilise methods which might best illuminate the purpose of the enquiry and the research questions, while also responding to resources available, including time. As qualitative research texts highlight, naturalistic inquiry requires a flexible approach to research design, responding to emerging issues both in the data and the field (Cresswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). The following describes the research design used for the study. The section "Design constraints" later in this chapter discusses design changes in response to data quality and time constrictions.

Grounded theory involves theoretical sampling “*individuals who can contribute to the evolving theory*” (Cresswell, 1998, p. 118). As the research interest is the processes interacting with the implementation of RCD projects, sampling projects in a formative stage or recently completed was chosen to provide more recent reflections on the dynamics and processes. It was also acknowledged that RCD implementation involves many different community members and thus the sample needed to include representatives of a broad range of stakeholder groups involved in RCD. Quantity was not the target, but to have sufficient data for comparison to achieve saturation of emerging categories, verifying their relevance and significance in the development of theory. Three different projects from different rural areas formed the basis of the sample. The sampling steps are detailed under “Recruiting Participants”.

While each of these projects might be considered a ‘case’, the method chosen is not case studies, as although the broader contextual data may help to elucidate the community fabric, the interactive processes are the focus of the research, not the case in its self. Instead, the dynamics are evident within the experiences of people both individually and collectively. These experiences can be accessed through community members ‘telling their stories’ and through observing the interactions of community members as the project is implemented. It is well documented that face-to-face communication yields an understanding of peoples’ experience not possible from secondary or survey data (Cresswell, 1998; Luloff, 1999; Patton, 1990).

Four sources of data were used in the research: interviews, documents, observation and field notes. Falling within a naturalistic enquiry approach these also directly addressed the research interest and have been demonstrated (in for example, the previously cited research) to provide relevant data regarding community and/or community development processes.

4: 2.1 Interview design

Open interview methods were chosen to let people share their experiences in their own way. A prompt sheet was developed which included open questions, each with a list of issues (see Appendix

1). These were developed using the sensitising concept of 'processes in community and RCD' and after discussion with the research supervisor and a research colleague. The questions were used only when prompts for conversation were needed, thus allowing the participants to offer and explore their experience, while also enabling the interviewer to seek information regarding the research interest. Interviews were conversational in style, opening with "Tell me about the community before the project".

Interviews are not only appropriate for gaining detailed data on peoples' perceptions and experiences but, as words are symbols, these discourses also hold the meaning given to the experience, providing another insight into the impact on individuals and the community fabric. In this manner interviews would provide data at both an individual and collective level into the processes of RCD. During analysis, these processes can be explored across all interviews, as well as identifying and comparing processes associated with different projects. This is in keeping with the grounded theory approach with a comparative orientation where there are similar variables yet different outcomes (Borgatti, 2005).

4: 2.2 Contextual data

Additionally, documentation relating to the RCD projects and the associated rural communities provided a source for contextualising issues emerging from the interviews. Relevant documents included agreements, Memorandums Of Understanding, minutes of meetings, correspondence between participants, newspaper articles, maps of the rural area/townships, and tourism brochures. Likewise, time spent within the community interacting with members and observing interactions and the environment provided further context for interpreting peoples' expressed experience. These were documented in field notes and photos. Given the length of time often taken for RCD, these visits provided a snapshot of the community at that point in time, not an extended observation of processes over time.

4: 3. Data Collection

4: 3.1 Ethical conduct

As a professional in the area of social sciences, the researcher was acutely aware of the importance of ensuring the research processes complied with ethical standards. Using the Australian Psychological Society (APS) *Code of Ethics* (Australian Psychological Society Ltd, 1997) and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct Involving Humans* (National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 1999) as guides, the issues of informed voluntary participation (that is, with informed consent and no coercion), ensuring anonymity, confidentiality and privacy, and avoiding possible harm were considered paramount.

A minimal risk application was approved by the joint University of Tasmania and State Government Department of Health and Human Services, Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network. This included detail regarding data storage, third party recruitment, introductory emails for RCD agencies, introductory letters for potential participants, information sheets detailing the research, consent forms and interview prompt questions (see appendices for the documents used). Via the formal statements on the application, the researcher committed to abide by the principles within the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct Involving Humans* (National Health and Medical Research Council, et al., 1999). Although data was collected prior to the current APS (Australian Psychological Society Ltd, 2007) and National Health and Medical Research Council (National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2007) ethics publications, the research still complies with the revised standards.

Data was stored electronically on the university server, accessed through the researcher's login and password. Hard copy materials such as field notes, documents provided by participants and consent forms were all filed in a locked cabinet and locked office at the University Department of Rural Health premises. These will be retained for at least five years after the completion of the research.

Ensuring informed voluntary participation recruitment was via third party, with information sheets and consent forms sent to a contact within the organisation and disseminated from there. In all cases, the recruiter distributed the sheets and those interested made contact either directly with the researcher, or via the recruiter if they preferred. All data was collected with consent. No risks were anticipated regarding the methods and no participants expected which might be considered vulnerable. Anonymity, privacy and confidentiality were maintained during collection, analysis and in the reporting of the research.

4: 3.2 Recruiting participants

In keeping with ethics, participants were identified through third party recruitment. Two people were approached concurrently by the researcher to act as recruiters; one with contacts in RCD with an economic orientation and one with a social well-being focus.

The administration of an economic oriented community development project was approached by the researcher to identify a potential third party recruiter. The Community Engagement Officer (EO) was emailed the 'agency email' as per the administration's recommendations. The research, RCD definitions and the role of a third party recruiter were discussed and clarified over a follow-up phone call between the EO and researcher. The EO approached key contacts in two project communities. Information sheets, participant letter and consent forms were distributed to stakeholders via these contacts.

Three people volunteered from a project in a Tasmanian timber and tourism oriented rural community with a population of approximately 2,000 (later referred to as 'Community 1'). The nearest regional centre has a population of around 7,000 people. The small number from this project related to only three people receiving the research information from the key contact. Further contacts were recommended by all three with offers to distribute the research information kit. However, as key concepts and themes appeared to reach saturation, further recruitment in this community was not followed-up.

Concurrently, thirteen people associated with a project in a Victorian coastal town (later referred to as 'Community 2') volunteered for an interview. These contacts resulted in ten interviews, covering all sectors of the community (business, community, retired, long term and recent residents). With a population of approximately 3,000, the rural community was originally based around fishing and agriculture, but recent changes had led to a high component of tourism and retired residents. The town was situated almost twenty kilometres from an agriculturally oriented regional centre with population of 14,000.

The point of contact in the NGO with projects of a social wellbeing nature was the State Manager of Community Services, who oversaw the managers of all service delivery divisions within the agency. The agency email was sent and a face-to-face discussion followed, clarifying RCD orientations and potentially suitable project types. This resulted in contact with the Manager of the Counselling and Family Support Services. Further face to face discussion of the research and RCD was held before this person sent the information sheet, introductory letter and consent forms to staff of potentially suitable projects.

One staff member contacted the researcher and offered to recruit participants by providing the same information to project stakeholders. This project (later described as 'Community 3') was based in a predominantly mining community of Tasmania, responding to a social need across a cluster of small towns with a total population of around 5,000. These towns are situated about a two hour drive on narrow windy roads from the nearest city with a population of almost 20,000. The contact distributed information to twelve people involved in the project. Eight made contact with the researcher, resulting in seven interviews (not all were needed for data saturation).

Thus data was collected from three different RCD projects in three different rural communities. One project had a social well-being focus while two involved economic development for increased social well-being. In all cases, the recruiter distributed the sheets and those interested made contact either directly with the researcher, or via the recruiter if they preferred. Two of the third party

recruiters made a conscious effort to distribute the research information widely and cover a broad range of stakeholders, while the third selected a small numbers of key informants.

4: 3.3 In the field

The time spent in each of the communities, the associated interviews and other data collection are mapped in Figure 2. Participants elected a preferred time and place for the interview which resulted in interviews being held in participants' workplaces, homes and a café. The process of collection, transcription and analysis began with a single interview and brochures gathered from Community 1.

A second group of ten interviews were held six weeks later over a four day visit to Community 2.

During this visit, documents were collected regarding the project and the rural community, including participant correspondence, minutes of meetings, reports, mud maps, tourism brochures and newspaper articles. Time was spent observing the environment and observations were recorded in field notes and photographs. Participants included the researcher in gatherings at local eating and popular meeting spaces.

Two weeks later, the researcher returned to Community 1, spending two days in the town making observations of the environment, and interviewing two participants. Material gathered included a PowerPoint regarding the project and the region's history and needs, a televised interview regarding the community 'spirit' of the town, newspaper articles of the project and participant documents regarding their experience of project participation.

Community 3 was visited three weeks later for two days. Six interviews were held, as well as informal conversations and time spent observing the environment within the community.

'Outsiders' emerged as a strong concept during this visit, so a further two interviews were held with outsider stakeholders in the following week. More documents including agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, and related community projects were gathered.

Holding an initial interview in advance of the others, started the grounded theory processes of simultaneous analysis and data collection and continued comparison as well as allowed reflection upon interview style, for consideration of improvement. As depicted in Figure 2, the staggered data collection was simultaneous to the coding and analysis of data already collected. In this manner the data analysis informed the data collection, guiding the documents sought and/or stakeholder interviews needed.

Interviews lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes and were digitally audio-recorded so that while interviewing, the focus could be on rapport and impressions, leaving the detail to be drawn from transcriptions. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Many interviewees also spoke about their experiences with a range of RCD projects, as well as the projects through which they were contacted, which enriched the data.

Overall, a broad range of stakeholders of RCD participated, including those who had a long history of community engagement and leadership, those for whom this was their first experience and described themselves as following the lead of others, and community development practitioners. Participants were both male and female, ranged in age from mid-20s to mid-70s, and included people who had only primary school education through to those with tertiary qualifications. Their connection with the rural community ranged from those who were born in the community through to one who had only been there 3 months and those who worked in the community but lived elsewhere. From a vocational perspective, some had always been homemakers, some were self-employed trade-people, some self-employed businessmen, and others were employed in white-collar roles, blue-collar roles, and as company executives. A table of the number of participants by relevant feature is found in Appendix 7.

In summary, across the three rural communities, a total of eight and a half days were spent in the field and twenty-one interviews held. Interviews were oriented predominantly around the experiences relating to three RCD projects, but also included other community and project

experiences. For each project, time was spent in the community, visiting participants, doing interviews, meeting informally over a meal or in the street, and taking photos of the community environment. Participants were only formally interviewed once, however some were also engaged in informal interaction with the researcher. The researcher kept a journal of her activities and impressions. Documents and photos were used to provide context when interpreting interview data.

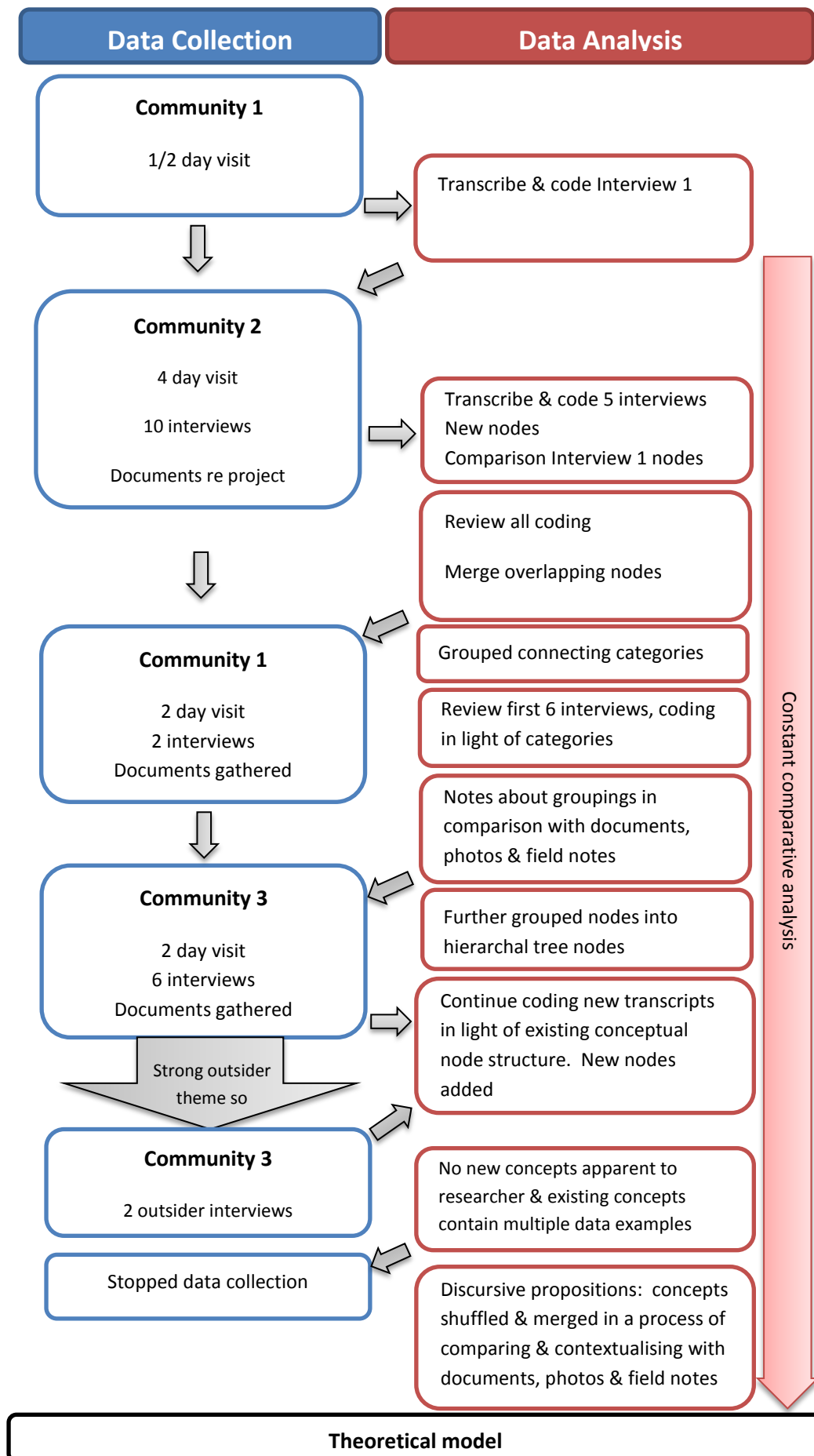


Figure 2: Data collection and analysis flow

4: 4. Data Analysis

Interview transcripts were coded using NVivo® (QSR International), a qualitative analysis software application. A summary of the interactive flow of data analysis described here is depicted in Figure 2.

The data was first examined line by line, open coding through creating free nodes of phrases and concepts found in the data, with the phenomenon of interest being community dynamics. In NVivo a node is where a representation of an idea, theme or category is stored. Free nodes stand alone, outside of any hierarchical relationships with other nodes. This created ninety-seven nodes after the first interview which through comparison and some merges, was reduced to seventy-six nodes after coding a further five interviews.

Axial coding was applied to these nodes whereby they were compared and grouped into categories, using tree nodes (stored in hierarchical catalogues) where nodes appeared to be subcategories of other concept nodes. Nodes representing overlapping concepts were merged. With the new node structure developed, the coding of the first six interviews was reviewed, capturing the themes emerging in the later coded interviews across all interviews. Coding using these nodes continued across the rest of the transcripts, continually comparing the data, using, and adding to the existing node structure. In this manner, the process of constant comparative analysis discovers key categories which continue to be compared and verified through identifying their existence, or not, in the other transcripts.

When the various concepts appeared to have reached saturation with no new nuances arising from the additional data, and similarly no new concepts appearing, the data within each concept was reviewed asking the question, “What’s happening here?”. Some nodes capturing different aspects of the same dynamic were merged. Key areas of interest emerged from this selective coding using the concepts at the top of the hierarchy of each tree node. From analysing the data coded in this

fashion, the theoretical propositions emerged which were developed discursively and documented in multiple versions of an evolving document titled 'data analysis ramblings'.

This process follows the data analysis steps for grounded theory outlined by Cresswell (1998, referencing Strauss and Corbin 1990), of:

.. developing categories of information (open coding), interconnecting the categories (axial coding), building a 'story' that connects the categories (selective coding) and ending with a discursive set of theoretical propositions. (p. 150)

4: 5. Design Constraints

As the research design evolved, other methods were considered which may have increased the opportunities for verification of the emerging theory. This process and its outcomes are described below.

An ethnographic approach, while providing additional depth to the data, would have required intensive resources to enable the researcher to be present across the community, observing project members interacting with rural community members and each other in the process of the RCD project implementation. Projects tend to take considerable time to implement (for example, those that participated ranged from fourteen months to four years). Resourcing for extended periods in the field was not available and would have limited the research to one project. Having a number of projects would instead provide increased breadth of project types and environments and thus increase the capacity for extrapolation of the findings. During analysis, multiple projects provided additional 'ground' for verification in the coding processes of grounded theory, as well as making it possible to compare any differences between projects. This increased rigor was achieved through adopting face to face communication as the primary research data collection method, supported by observation providing a 'snapshot' of the rural community, rather than extended observation of processes over time.

Documentation relating to the projects and observation provided a contextual understanding for the researcher when interpreting the interview data, adding understanding of geography, local economy, events, businesses, community activities, clubs, conflicts and the related boundary processes as they arose within the transcripts. It could be contended that coding of these documents would have added to the robustness of the theorising. However, people telling their stories as found in interview data relates directly to the focus of the research question: participants' experience of RCD processes. A detailed analysis of documents is more closely associated with case study methods (Cresswell, 1998; Patton, 1990).

A mixed method approach was considered which involved capturing the findings from the initial data analysis in a survey to be distributed back in the communities. This would have provided further verification and data triangulation with a larger sample. However, the key concepts as they emerged from the data, were complex and difficult to succinctly present in a survey in a manner that ensured participants understood the concepts being conveyed. Further interviews or focus groups were considered, however the constant comparative analysis of data from the multiple interviews across multiple projects provided sufficient rigor for the development of theory from the ground.

Data collection stopped when there was sufficient data on the emerging concepts. Looking at the distribution of participants, one targeted project had three interviews compared with ten and eight in the other targeted projects. Any extrapolation from single projects thus needs to be done with caution as a sweep of stakeholders was not achieved in one project. However, across all the data a broad range of stakeholders of RCD projects participated. Further, many participants spoke of more than one project experience, enriching the data with RCD experiences beyond the three projects targeted for sampling. Thus, the ability to develop theory overall was not affected, as there was rich data on the interactive processes of RCD. Qualitative research to develop theory from the ground is less concerned with sample size than the quality and thus capacity of the data to reach saturation of the concepts emerging.

In summary, other methods which may have been included in the design were excluded as the richness of data sufficiently supported the analysis. The initial theory generated in the current study can then be subjected to further verification in separate research.

4: 6. Presenting the Findings

The findings are presented in the following chapter. To provide the reader the opportunity to see the 'ground' from which it was drawn, each theoretical concept derived from the final stage of coding is presented and demonstrated with a quote from the nodes/categories from which the concept emerged. As the coding process highlights key terms or phrases, quotes have been abbreviated to contain the key phrase and sufficient context to provide the reader insight into the meaning expressed. Following is an example of the presentation of a quote in the findings chapters with the key phrase in bold and then the full detail of the quote in the transcript. The abbreviated version has sufficient context to portray the meaning expressed in the full version while being succinct in reducing the reading material to express the main point.

Abbreviated version:

*".. I think these kit homes are always the ones that are going to wreck it. .. the only ones that buy them are the ones that can't afford to buy anything else. So they're bringing **the wrong sort of people**. .." (2a)*

Transcript version:

*"I hope it doesn't go much further. I think these kit homes are always the ones that are going to wreck it. Because they build places that people - there's a development out the back of [Regional town]. So the only ones that buy them are the ones that can't afford to buy anything else. So they're bringing **the wrong sort of people**. And that's where I reckon you've got to be careful."*

At times the abbreviated version has reduced the amount of detail which added further ground to the concept, yet sufficient detail is kept to express the point. An example of this follows. While the

full version provides more detail on the emphasis the participant places on the issue, the abbreviated version captures the meaning being expressed:

Abbreviated version:

".. It will also generate a fair bit of greed and competition .. we wouldn't give it to the fucking jazz festival anyway, we'll be giving it to the, you know, disabled sailing kids and stuff like that .. we'll be fairly strong about what we spend money on. .. We won't be giving it away to the jazz festival, I can tell you." (2d)

Transcript version:

"Well, the, yes I guess that will, you know, I guess that will generate a fair bit of excitement and community interest I guess. It will also generate a fair bit of greed and competition about. Well we've already got people putting their hand up and, well we had to stop [member] because he's - would give money away. We haven't made any money yet and there he was trying to give money away to middle class people for the jazz festival. Well we wouldn't give it to the fucking jazz festival anyway. We'll be giving it to the, you know, disabled sailing kids and stuff like that. You know. We certainly won't be giving to the bloody middle class wankers at the jazz festival, I can tell you that. Be told. {pause} So that will generate interest in the community and we'll be fairly strong about what we spend money on. It will be a community performance, it won't be. We won't be giving it away to the jazz festival I can tell you."

Throughout the findings chapters, the researcher has erred on the side of leaving additional data to demonstrate the meaning rather than lose context thus endeavouring to ensure the transparency of the research for the reader.

To maintain confidentiality, information within quotes that would identify individuals has been changed or removed. Town and rural community names have been de-identified with bracketed descriptors such as [Regional town] or [Rural town]. People's names within quotes have also been replaced with relevant descriptors. Similarly, participant quotes have been referenced with a code where the number represents the rural community and the letter the individual.

The presentation of contextual data has been integrated throughout the presentation of transcript findings where it adds insight to the significance or function of processes, or where it further confirms boundaries by for example, indicating their physical representations. Dealing with contextual data in this integrated manner maintained the flow and endeavoured not to duplicate the presentation of findings.

4: 6.1 Defining terms

Some of the key terms used throughout the next chapters have been the subject of debate or hold varying meanings within different academic disciplines. As this research has taken a multidisciplinary perspective, key terms are defined below as they have been understood in this thesis.

Rural community

In seeing community as a process, the research will embrace not only the place based rural community, but also the processes associated with that community in all of their breadth and complexity, interacting with and associated with locality. As Hunter (2007, p. 28) neatly summarises, *“community is still spatially and locally rooted but federated and fused through the social and political construction of ever-larger communities of interest and identification.”* Rural community is this process of community within a rural setting.

Fabric of community

This term is used to encompass the complexity of community. It is not a new metaphor, being used since at least the early 1980's in the works of, for example, Cohen (1982b) and Larsen (1982) to express the interactive and interconnected nature of community. It is used in this research to highlight the multiple threads or components and the interconnected/interwoven nature of the relationships and processes of a community. Referring to the recent work of Cheers et al (2003), the fabric of community as understood for the current study is comprised of the spatial locality, the local society and the community field. In this manner it incorporates the physical space and its ongoing interaction with community dynamics, socioeconomic class dynamics within community,

organisational dynamics, occupational affects, action and activity both current and historical, external influences, individual personalities and kinship systems. The fabric of community is all of these interacting with ongoing fluidity.

Collective identity

Within this research, the term collective identity refers to the sense of identity members' gain from being associated with a collective, including what has been termed community identity or specific grouping such as cultural identity, racial identity, regional identity, or national identity. It refers to the sense of identity expressed in commitment to the collective, and the sense of shared consciousness of difference to others.

4: 7. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the grounded theory methodology underpinning the current study. It describes the research design, including the steps in the data collection and analysis, qualifying design strengths and constraints. The manner of handling data for presentation in the following chapter is detailed, and some key accepted terms used throughout the thesis have been defined. The findings which emerged from this research strategy are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Community Processes in Rural Communities

Findings Part 1

The first part of the research findings are presented in two sections:

1. Describing Community
2. Boundary processes within rural communities

Section 1 identifies the defining parameters of community for this research. Within the context of the locality, multiple communities existed as constituents of the rural community. Communities were most easily recognised at their boundaries where they were defined by their difference with another community. These distinctions were founded in a difference in values, a sense of identity and meaning which were held by members' individually and collectively. The purpose of a boundary determined its properties, and thus boundaries were fluid in response to subtle changes of purpose or need.

Section 2 details the boundary processes found within these rural communities. The values and qualities that determine a boundary were at times expressed symbolically in language, physical infrastructure or actions. The role of this symbolic expression as a boundary process is detailed in section 2.1.

When articulated, the beliefs and values held within communities were apparent as an agenda shared by members of that community, particularly when members contrasted them with the different values of another constituent community. The existence, function and quality of agendas are evidenced in section 2.2.

Another type of boundary process was evident within the manner in which one constituent community was associated with another. These processes of alignment and non-alignment between communities are described in section 2.3.

Overall, the chapter presents the community processes as discovered within the rural communities and members' understanding of these processes.

5: 1. Describing Community

".. I mean we don't discuss what community is, we all know .." (1a)

During the interviews, participants did not usually focus on their understanding of community and the interactive processes that constitute a community. However, the interviews provided an opportunity to reflect and describe their activities, and through these reflections, clear perceptions of what constituted their community became apparent. These depictions included geographic regions or towns through to a multiplicity of communities found within these rural landscapes and thereby involved fluidity of boundaries.

5: 1.1 Geographically defined rural community

All participants repeatedly identified and described community in terms of geography. Its easy identification was considered a significant component of the success of rural community development (RCD).

When talking about community within rural townships, the initial and predominant understanding of residents is that a community is defined geographically. As illustrated in the following quote, when asked to describe "the community", a number of participants immediately began describing the geographic features and landmarks that were either readily identified as iconic for the area or those that defined the boundary of the community:

“So, we’re really talking about I think south, the point-land. .. it’s a very linear, coastal type community. It’s on a road to nowhere, with nothing beyond [Rural area] essentially. It’s made up of probably two major towns – [Rural town one] with about 800 people, [Rural town two] 600, and all these little farming communities that ribbon off the main road.” (1a)

The geographic shape of the community was emphasised further by using hand movements or drawing mud maps while highlighting both the isolation and that a feature of two regions was there being no thoroughfare to another place. It was considered significant that people consciously entered these areas as their destination, rather than en route.

The rural community was thus defined by a geographic boundary and anyone living within the perimeter was described as being part of the community. However, the purpose of articulating the boundary affected its position. In this manner, community boundaries are a fluid process, responding to subtle changes of purpose or need. For example, as in the previous quote, at times the geographic boundary encompassed all or a number of the townships in an area, depending on the reason for describing their community. An expansive approach to boundary placement was evident when describing the common experience of living in that area to an ‘outsider’ like the researcher, or when comparing their community with another rural area with whom they may compete for funding/facilities, or for economic viability.

In contrast, participants frequently identified boundaries between the townships in a rural area.

“The community in [Rural town], you know they’re very close knit .. see themselves a little bit on the outer compared to places like [another rural town in region]. And they see themselves I think in some respects as poor cousins, as far as the council’s concerned anyway.” (2g)

Neighbouring smaller towns and rural areas that were included in the previous example were not included in this community identity. At times these community identities were strongly differentiated by members, accenting the conflicting values and rivalry which to them were highly apparent:

"I think [Town a]'s really about the wild fishery and aquaculture; [Town b]'s really a timber town; [Town c] is about the history of the region, because that was the hub of the whole [Geographic area] before there was a road. .. I guess [Town c] is the commerce centre now of the area. [Town d]'s about wine and art, and, you know, an alternative lifestyle. .. Oh and people are different, you know they're really different .. You know I hated them with a passion when they first arrived, and they used to tell us what to do and what not to do." (1b)

The above quote describes the experienced differences between rural communities within twenty kilometres of each other within the region that was previously described and identified as the rural community. Distance is not a necessary component of establishing a community boundary, nor for differences to be felt and distinguished between geographically defined communities.

The following quote also demonstrates a strong sense of difference between two communities separated by a narrow waterway.

"And then you've got the [Geographic area]'s. Strange, all of them. Weird. Weird breed. Like they're just different. I don't know why." (2a)

These communities share the same infrastructure based in one of the communities, for shopping and business. Yet despite this integration and close proximity, the communities are distinguished from each other by respective members and a sense of different identity is strongly expressed.

Participants, who reflected upon these geographically defined communities, attributed strength in rurality. The visibility of the edge of a populated - non-populated area as found in rural townships, is in contrast to cities and suburbs where it is more difficult to identify and contain a community defined by a distinct visual boundary. A clear geographic boundary marker contributed to a sense of identity for rural community members. It was argued by participants that a strong community identity is not equally found in non-rural areas due to a lack of distinct geographic boundaries.

".. in a town of this nature which, you know, you can put a ring around it very easily. Not say like Caulfield in Melbourne; it's very hard, I mean you can define it in a formal sense, but informally as a community you know, where does Caulfield begin and end and so on. But here you can. Well it's got a heart. I mean it is a community, and it's an identifiable community.

You know people say, 'I come from [Rural town]'. If they live in Caulfield, they come from Melbourne or whatever. So you've got that." (2c)

For many participants the geographical community provided meaning which cannot be fully understood through a description of place, but needs to be experienced. Having drawn a mud map of the area to describe and introduce the researcher to the community, one participant concluded that

".. you've got to see the set-up of it all, but now you can't, but I'll show you later on." (2d)

The participant later provided a tour of each of the small towns within the rural area, and narrated their history. There was a sense that the geography and physical structure of the rural community provided an insight into of the history and daily experiences within the community; that the geography could provide insight into the meaning, experience and sense of identity associated with being members of the community.

These dynamics highlight the significance of the meaning associated with a rural community, the identity pertaining to the physically defined area, and the power of that as a collective identity. The importance was further demonstrated in peoples' response to their rural community. Participants directly related their community activity to their feeling for the town:

"Well I'm in the Red Cross, .. the State Emergency Service .. Mothers' club or Friends of the School .. Yeah I've never not been (laughs) – I'm a life member of the [Rural town] footy club. Yes, yeah. No I love the town and I just love things to go right for it. I just love it." (2e)

This emotional connection and contribution to a collective and personal identity was also described as a sense of belonging, and a safe a place that can be called home:

".. But we all manage to have some sense of home, or form some sense of belonging somewhere. .. Yes. So it's that sense of belonging, or it's that sense of safeness .." (3a)

Participants argued that community development activities were facilitated by being an identifiable community. The daily interaction and connectedness became associated with visible boundaries, which further brought commitment and action to achieving valued goals for the community. The

strength of meaning, identity and values which the rural boundary signified facilitated collective action. This was frequently described as the heart and soul of the community:

“That’s what I learnt about the [project] – the community’s got a soul, and underneath there’s a bubbling mass of people and humanity we’ve got here that argue and enjoy life together. They’re the real soul; they’re the hard core soul within the people. And that came out through this process .. That’s the only reason it [the project] happened, you know because of that soul. You couldn’t do it in many places I don’t think. .. Yeah, you know it’s just good. Pick your country town and they’ll do it every time for you.” (1b)

Loyalty was one of the values considered an important part of the identity associated with country communities but less so of suburban lifestyles.

“.. And I suppose that worries me a bit that perhaps loyalty isn’t in the city what loyalty is in the country.” (2e)

This was seen to contribute to the communities’ identity and capacity for collective response.

Three other aspects of the dynamics of living in a rural community were seen as strengthening the capacity for collective action. Participants frequently referred to their remoteness as creating an environment where:

“Because we’re so remote we know each other on a first name basis ..” (3b)

And that knowing each other contributed to the ability to create collective action:

“The sorts of things you can do in a rural area where you know people.” (2f)

A second aspect was that there were highly visible processes and dynamics. These could be positive or negative, but as they were highly visible it was possible to know what would need to be navigated. These processes were often described as gossip and politics.

“I mean that’s like all small communities. It’s all word of mouth. .. I mean you can get a bad name in 10 minutes, but a good name takes years. And this town’s terrible for that. Gossip. Which most small towns are.” (2a)

“But, in rural areas you are governed a lot by the politics.” (3c)

Participants identified that close connections were important influences in the communication of information. They clearly considered their networks and information flows to be different from city communities.

“That’s an example: ‘we [city based services] leave out brochures’ – it doesn’t work on the [Rural area]; people do not pick up brochures here. The way to get information around here is word of mouth.” (3b)

Communication within rural communities was not through advertising materials, but through relationships and networks. These were frequently informal processes occurring in community gathering spaces.

“.. the old pub my understanding is it has virtually always been the community centre meeting place. Even though there’s a Community Centre there, they still come here as well.” (2g)

A third aspect was in response to the geography symbolising the isolation and difficulty of access to resources. The responsibility for action thus fell within the community and if something was to be achieved, it was by working together.

“.. and that’s probably the beauty of it – I hate the expression, ‘the tyranny of distance’, but a tyranny of distance away from everybody else, because, but we know we’re all we’ve got down here, we’re more willing to work with one another.” (3b)

In summary, the data identified that the parameters of rural community were geographically defined for participants. The rural geography provided clear landmarks for boundaries with which to determine a community. However, the boundaries and membership identified depended upon the purpose for defining community. At times the boundaries were between broader rural regions yet later distinct communities were described comparing one township to another within the region. It was contended that the capacity to identify clear geographic boundaries contributed to a strong sense of community identity and belonging which, as a motivation to be involved in community activity, facilitated RCD. Being an identifiable community brought highly visible processes and

dynamics, including responsibilities for action that were highlighted by the isolation, and also facilitated RCD.

5: 1.2 Constituent communities

A multiplicity of communities which held different purpose and meaning for members were found within the rural communities. These many communities appeared to be complete within themselves yet elements of the larger rural community. They were positioned variably with each other through a range of boundary processes as they co-existed. They also exhibited the same processes and dynamic boundaries as described for rural communities. These communities within community will be referred to as constituent communities, being part of a whole, yet separate entities.

Most participants described those living in a geographically defined area as the *“whole community”* or *“broader community”*.

“You can’t sort of just concentrate on one area. You’ve got to look at the whole community.”
(2b)

“.. get the message out to a broader community” (2c)

However they then went on to describe what they recognised as existing within the ‘whole’. These identifiable communities held some common identity, feature, experience, purpose or interest.

“Oh yeah it’s a normal local community .. a predominant aged community here, there’s no doubt about that. Obviously a bit of a retirement place as well. But certainly there’s some very rich people here too. And it’s also like an itinerate place, I mean you’ve got a lot of people that only have a holiday ..” (2g)

As these communities were described by the manner or feature by which they were recognisable, generic descriptors were used rarely. When they did arise, they included terms such as *“groups”*, *“sections”*, *“sectors”*, *“sort of people”*, *“crowd of people”*, and *“types”*. While at times this included clubs and formal structured groups it was also used to describe linkages between people within the community:

"I think everyone's had their own, yeah probably their own crowd of people that have been interested and it's all come into one .." (2e)

The following boundaries were apparent within the data, revealing a range of constituent communities. They have been grouped into three types based on the aetiology: feature-based, interest-based and cause-based. **It is amongst these dynamics that the RCD projects emerged as a new cause based constituent community.**

5: 1.2.1 Feature-based communities

Feature-based constituent community boundaries were identifiable in differences relating to a common feature of members' lives, rather than engagement in relationships and activities with one another. The following examples are by no means the only feature-based communities within the rural communities at the time of the interviews, but those that were most prominent when discussing community in light of the RCD activity.

5: 1.2.1a Length of connection with the rural community

A very apparent yet fluid boundary was found differentiating between constituent communities based on the length of connection a person has with the rural community. The sea change or tree change phenomenon has altered rural community from a place where people felt they knew everybody to a sense of change that brought unknown dynamics.

"See back then you could go down the street and knew everyone. Now you don't. It's changed. So, yeah, it's a hard one. .. You used to know everyone." (2a)

Participants sometimes struggled to find descriptive terms to explain the difference, creating terms like "new-comers", "recent comers" or "new settlers". The challenge seemed to be around not devaluing the new-comers' contribution and belonging to the rural community, while acknowledging their recency, and the sense that they bring something new:

"That's right, new settlers I call them. And good people. In the majority of retirees, so they've got a fair bit to offer. .. You can't call them 'blow-ins' or 'those mainlanders' because that's rude." (1b)

New-comers were seen as different to long term residents. Only those who had been born in the community or who had resided there more than twenty years, classified as being local. This was consciously discussed between the two constituent communities.

"That's what they told me, if I want to be local I need to live here for twenty years. I said I will never be." (3d)

Those who had lived in the rural community twenty years, while being a long-timer to more recent members, could still be a new-comer in the eyes of families with heritage within the community, those who were *"born and bred"* in the area. This was an example of the fluidity of boundaries shifting according to meaning and purpose. In the following quotes, the first acknowledges that even 32 years in a community was not the same quality as those families with generations, and in the second, the member considers himself and some others as 'new' compared to those that have had a permanent connection with the area, but as having more 'history' than more recent arrivals.

"Yeah, I've been here 32 or three years. My wife was, she's born and bred here, and her father was born and bred here." (2a)

".. There was, oh [Long-timer 1] had been here all of her life, now [Long-timer 1]'s in her seventies. .. And I've been here fifteen years. And outside of that most of the people are newer than me. And a lot of them – like [New-comer 1]'s only been here a couple of years .." (2h)

A sense of agency also distinguished these communities. New-comers had experienced a world where their actions brought significant change to their environments, even if just through the recent moving from one lifestyle to another. Such a fresh consciousness of their agency and capacity for choice was identified as underpinning a different approach to life.

"I think the nature, or, the nice thing about the [Rural town] community which is interesting, I think there is a fair percentage of people who live in [Rural town] by choice, and it's been not long .. Whereas in a lot of country rural communities they live there because that's where the family have always lived. It's the circumstance .. next thing they've found they've married the person, you know and they've inherited a property or a business, and whilst they're probably

really, really happy there, it's not been a conscious choice. Whereas with [Rural town] it's full of people who have made a conscious choice to live in [Rural town]." (2i)

This sense of agency affected the approach to engaging in the rural community, such that newcomers were more likely to seek change where they felt improvements could be made. This was seen to be in contrast to the long-timers who saw themselves as more likely to maintain the status quo, even if they were unhappy about it.

"But I think that the thing that they did bring with them is the fact that they wanted to do it rather than expecting it to have already happened, or it should have happened, or someone else was at fault for not having it here, or whatever it was. Yeah, so that – I suppose, and coming in from outside of the community, if you've lived here like we have for fifteen years you've got used to [it]. .. So you just accepted the fact, that's the way it was. You know you grumble about it .." (2h)

New-comers from their city and professional experience, brought with them expectations for services and facilities ranging from health services to restaurants, also visible in the recent opening of businesses such as a wine bar. These were not expectations of long-timers who were instead viewed as insular.

"I think it's fair to say that it was a fairly insular country town, and before the [RCD project]. And because of the influx of retirees, it's become, I hate to use the word sophisticated, but it's become, it demands more luxury services than it had originally." (2c)

In contrast to professionals, were other new-comers described as the *"wrong sort of people"* (2a) who brought values that threatened the rural community values. They were seen as being a potential problem, bringing drugs and behaviours not stereotypically associated with a clean healthy lifestyle of a rural community.

"And that's where I reckon you've got to be careful. .. I mean at the moment, drugs is the biggest problem in [Rural town], and it's 'cos of the .. fairly cheap rent." (2a)

In both cases there was a clear sense that the new-comer constituent community looked for an experience in community which varied from long-timers.

Long-timers were aware of this different perspective. While some were comfortable with these influences, others were very concerned about how it affected their familiar processes.

“And there’s been four or five people that are not born and bred here, they’re, you know, people that moved into the district. They’re retired people, and they’ve been worth their weight in gold. Don’t think that the locals always agree with some of the philosophies they’ve got.” (1b)

Some long-timers expressed concerns that their community was not overly active or vocal and thus change could be driven by new-comers whose views may not represent long-timers.

“.. that community inactivity by the (what do you call it?) the older, not older residents but the established residents in a town. They let decision making default to, in some cases, the wrong people.” (1c)

Both long-timers and new-comers were mindful of their differences. Not only were new-comers (even of ten years) very aware of their recency status, but they were also conscious that long-timers saw them as novel.

“There was a fair bit of, not jealousy, but consciousness on the part of people who consider themselves a Johnny-come-lately, that locals consider them so” (2d)

It was particularly felt by new-comers that long-timers did not see them as necessarily having the right to make changes to the way the rural community worked. There was a sense of some antagonism:

“And don’t forget we are outsiders. I’m from mainland. ‘How dare you come from mainland and try to tell us how to live.’” (3d)

The distinct boundary between long-timers and new-comers highlights the importance of the rural community identity being founded in an historical memory. Without this knowledge it was felt that new-comers did not necessarily understand the locals/long-timers’ needs and experiences.

“It is, as I say, probably what we don’t like is people moving in and not knowing what the place has ever been like before. .. probably one of the hardest things I find is like they’ll go down and they’ll drench down the front, you know get the seaweed off, and people will meet you down

the street and they'll say, 'Oh look at this. Look what they're doing for [Rural town]. [Rural town]'s never had a beach.' Well I mean we, we swam seven days a week. You know [Rural town]'s had all that and the people who've come in have got no idea what we did have many years ago. No, they've got no idea really. No idea." (2e)

A need by long-timers to educate others about community history was apparent throughout the interviews, reinforcing the difference in historical knowledge. Participants went to considerable lengths to explain to the researcher historical facts about the town, its physical evolution and significant moments for its members.

However a lack of historical knowledge, while acknowledged by both communities as important, is not always necessarily an antagonistic boundary. For some it was just a reality to be respected; there are those with local history and those without.

".. it was fairly obvious that about half the community are new-comers like me, and the other half are the old timers and they've been here for generations and they have that core. .." (2c)

So although at times new-comers referred to locals as *"very insular and not very accommodating towards visitors"*, some described a different experience. This was particularly in rural communities where the sea/tree change phenomenon had changed the balance of new-comers such that they were not considered a minority:

"But what's happened here is that because the numbers or new people are now pretty much equal the locals, there seems to have been an acceptance and it's a very warm and friendly environment." (2c)

In all the participating projects, constituent community boundary processes relating to the length of connection with the rural community were apparent. The boundary between new-comers and long-timers was highlighted by two key facets: the different values, philosophies and career experiences found in life beyond country towns, and a sense of rural community identity which encompassed historical knowledge of the community. New-comers brought different expectations of services and facilities along with a strong sense of agency about making change. At times there were suspicion

and tensions between the two communities, while at other times there was respect and a desire to share knowledge and ensure representation.

5: 1.2.1b Time currently spent within the rural community

In one rural community there was a constituent community which lived in the township for weekends and holidays or who travelled to “town” for extended periods of work. Members were described as “fifty percenters” or “part-timers” and the community boundary was identified in contrast with the “full-timers” who resided only in the rural community.

Most part-timers were also new-comers having taken up part-time residence as part of a lifestyle change. When interviewed, part-timers clarified their status in response to being asked to describe the community.

“Well I better explain my position. I’ve been in [Rural town], or [wife] and I, for three years only, and we’re part timers. We spend fifty percent or roughly fifty percent in Melbourne and fifty percent here.” (2j)

As demonstrated in the previous quote part-timers sensed that their experience of the dynamics and processes were likely to be different to a full-timer and thus effect their community description.

Full-timers however, were not a homogeneous community, existing only in the daily and weekly experience of being continuously in the rural community compared to part-timers. Indeed full-timer membership included both new-comers and long-timers, although there was a predominance of long-timers.

The full-timer/part-timer constituent community boundary was peculiar to one rural community of the three involved in the research. Where it presented, the part-timer contribution to the broader community and membership within other constituent communities was important.

5: 1.2.1c Visitors

Participants in the research made a distinction between local and non-local constituent communities. Being local was associated with the geographic boundary described in 5:1.1. Non-

locals lived beyond the rural community boundary and usually engaged with the rural community for the purposes of their vocation.

As with new-comers, this boundary process was founded in the belief by locals that the different lifestyles may hold different values and bring a different culture to the rural community.

“And see that’s another thing that worries me a bit is that, without being terrible, people from cities don’t know how a country [community] works.” (2e)

Non-locals also described the rural community as having its own culture which they could not assume to know, and needed to take time to understand:

“I think it’s just about listening to what they’re saying to us; understanding the culture of the [Geographic area] is really critical. .. they’re like a lot of small isolated communities, yeah they very much have their own structure and they very much have their own culture.” (3e)

The boundary processes also involved non-locals being aware of their status, acknowledged in their acceptance of terms such as ‘outsiders’ or ‘fly-ins’ to describe their relationship with the local community.

“.. Because I am a fly-in and fly-out.” (3a)

“And don’t forget we are outsiders.” (3d)

A point of tension for these constituent communities was the possibility of non-locals taking employment which might have been filled by locals:

“.. ‘cos she is, well she’s probably as local as any of the girls [employed] there get. .. I didn’t like it. I think it should have been more local, but that’s only my view. ..” (2a)

The concern seemed to relate to a sense of displacing the local community. Ensuring locals did not feel displaced or disadvantaged in any way by the increased presence and activity of non-locals was considered a significant factor in creating smooth boundary processes between these communities.

“So in spite of the fact that you’ve got a lot of new people coming into the town and continuing, they’re mainly retirees. .. But they also haven’t intruded on the local community in a job sense, and I think that’s pretty important.” (2c)

The local and non-local constituent communities were identified in each of the participating rural communities. Members from each considered the boundary important to be managed, ensuring the local community felt heard and not displaced by members of the non-local community.

5: 1.2.1d Age demographics

All participants were very aware of age related community boundary processes and frequently referred to a younger community and an older community. There was acknowledgement of the different contributions made and the different needs held by these constituent communities.

Participants were attuned to rural communities having a higher population of older people compared to younger people. Here the fluidity of boundaries continues to be apparent, sometimes including or differentiating those of retirement age.

".. a predominant aged community here .. a bit of a retirement place as well. .." (2g)

At times the boundary for young people focused on the under 25 year olds as in the below quote which also highlights the different needs of youth.

"With young people there are things; we just started connecting with the young people in the area, but the problem is we had very limited resources here to do it .." (3d)

At other times the boundary encompassed adults with families of school age children:

".. It was also still relatively cheap for young people to build their first house and grow their family. And that's still a major part of it .. youngies .. Young tradies." (2d)

It was recognised that the younger community was significantly smaller and many youth left rural communities due to the lack of local further education opportunities.

".. oh Uni changed it here .. as soon as they turn their 18 or whatever, they're off .. the kids actually go away .." (2a)

Young people leaving for education created a change in the demographics of the rural communities as they then stayed away to pursue employment and career opportunities. This factor was also combined with older people who retiring and moving into the rural community seeking a sea or tree

change. The imbalance of these age related constituent communities left a gap in the social activities and interactions found within the rural community.

".. what was happening that there are many parents around my age, fifty to fifty-five up, and sixty, and you can go into a pub or club or into a supermarket and ask them where their kids are, and they'll tell you they're on the mainland. Like, you know and just if you took the demographics of .. from birth to eighty in and around this area and [Neighbouring town]. You've got this huge horseshoe; all the kids left. And that's where we're still struggling now, there's golf clubs and football clubs and cricket clubs haven't got those thirty year olds around, at the moment, running them. .. The last, I'd say four or five years we've got a lot of new people in, and they're good folks, they are mixing well. Most of them are retired and they've got their time on their hands. You still miss the youth, you know the young people." (1b)

Given the size of the older community, concern was expressed that their values be taken into consideration when decisions are made that impact the rural community:

"Yeah, it's probably the older people I'm thinking of, that you know I hope things don't change drastically." (2e)

Even when taking into account the fluidity of the boundaries, the age related boundary processes were affected by the older community having a far larger membership than the younger community. This was understood to have resulted from the lack of further education opportunities within rural communities.

5: 1.2.1e Socio economic status

In each rural community, socio economic status (SES) boundary processes were raised. These were associated with wealth, lifestyle and values.

Affluence and its contrast were readily recognised by participants and described in various ways:

".. a normal local community, and it's the 'haves', the 'have nots' " (2g) (emphasis added)

*".. even though the boom is over, there's still that level of interest in the region, from interstate people. And they are **cashed up** .." (1a) (emphasis added)*

In one town affluence could be mapped in a geographic sense as a “new” part of town was recent sub-divisions built on by new-comers creating their chosen lifestyle. The ‘old’ township was definable in the older street pattern and buildings.

“This (street name) Parade is the oldest street in [Rural town] as you can probably see by the houses anyway. ..” (2e)

One member talked about it as two separate townships within the town’s boundaries: “new [Rural town] and old [Rural town]”. The newly built areas were in two sections, one that housed mid to low SES including employed and pensioners and another with modern architecturally designed homes where self-funded retirees and part-timers lived.

Wealth was not the sole feature of difference in SES boundary processes. There were strong references to culture, lifestyle and attitudes. In one rural community, a constituent community was referred to as “the chardonnay set” or “white shoe brigade”, suggestive of a culture that is about high society, valuing material possessions, appearance and good wine.

“The [Business association] for the last three years has been seen to be representative of ‘the chardonnay set’ and the individuals leading the [Business association] have been very successful real estate agents, and their property developers and their group of friends.” (2i)

While the “chardonnay set” was drawn from local business and self-funded retirees, not all self-funded retirees or business owners were members of this community. It was described by affluent non-members as being elite, insular and having “no soul”, with a sense that appearance is all important. These appear to be the defining features.

“And the [sport1] club charges very little which means that any member of the community can afford to be a member, it’s not an exclusive club as so many of them are. .. the [sport2] club .. all dressed up to the nines and there’s no soul to it.” (2c)

The boundary process apparent here contrasts an elite, affluent community with a “true rural/country” culture, which includes a ‘hands-on’ attitude and relaxing over a beer. The

description of characteristics in the preceding quote was not about stereotypes, but about how other communities experienced the boundary processes on a day to day basis.

"Yeah, they drink their red wine and I tell them to get stuffed and [I] have a beer." (1a)

Members of the community contrasted with *"the chardonnay set"*, describe themselves as being inclusive and friendly, valuing the person and social relationships ahead of appearance. These contrasting communities could not accurately be described as white and blue collar, as membership was not tightly defined by vocation. Some members in both communities owned and managed their own businesses. The defining boundary process was in attitude and value differences symbolised by what they wore and drank, not strictly defined by their vocation or wealth.

There were those that felt they were not quite members of either community, but straddled the boundary and moved between the two. This was not seen as impossibly difficult or necessarily uncomfortable as no high conflict was described in these boundary processes, yet it was a boundary to be traversed with care:

"I have to be very careful because I'm in the middle. Always. Because I'm a townie, I drink with the white shoe brigade as well. I drink with everybody in the pub. And there are, there's one bar that the white shoe brigade drink in and one for the rest. And the white shoe brigade come out and I go into their yard. But the working class, the rest of [Rural town]; the main bar is as you know, a gorgeous mix of high life and low life, supreme court judges down to the poachers and the local low-life, the seasoned trouble makers. And it's just a wonderful old pub. A terrific pub. So I'm in between." (2d)

Although affluence played a role in identifying SES constituent communities, it was the values and culture combined with wealth that defined the boundary between them. The boundary is also visible in the geography of the rural community as well as symbolised in both the language used to describe each other, and the appearance of the members. The boundary was not identified by conflict, yet moving between these constituent communities was still respected as needing to be handled with sensitivity.

Each of the constituent communities presented in this section were identifiable through a boundary process of differentiation based on member features. The temporal and fluid nature of the boundaries identified earlier with the rural community, was again evident for feature-based communities. In the five features presented, the first three relate to the extent or type of connection to the rural area, while the latter two are demographic related.

5: 1.2.2 Interest-based communities

There was a multiplicity of interest-based communities within the participating rural communities. These constituent communities were constructed around sporting activities, artistic, musical and craft pursuits.

Sporting communities identified included cricket, yachting, motor boating, golf, football, bowls and angling. Each sporting community had facilities where members met to engage or further their interests. Such facilities prominently announced their existence.

Some rural communities had a central facility where artistic and craft communities gathered and shared their interest. Again, signed buildings were a physical indication of their presence. Musical communities described included classical and jazz.

Interest-based community members exhibited a passion associated with their common interest. The following quote indicates not only the passion, suggested by the descriptor of *“tragic”*, but also the tensions that existed in the community boundary processes at times.

“A normal community with its normal tragic footy club and all that. The usual thing. We’ve got sporting clubs that, you know there’s bowling clubs, there’s an angling club, there’s a cruiser club which is for old farts in their 60’s with cruiser boats. There’s a fair few marine oriented things, fishing.” (2d)

This passion was also reflected in another person’s sentiment that an interest based community was *“deadly boring” (2c)* in comparison to their community of interest.

While the boundaries were not usually associated with high conflict, tensions arose when there was a need to compete for the limited financial resources in rural communities.

“.. It will also generate a fair bit of greed and competition .. we wouldn’t give it to the fucking jazz festival anyway, we’ll be giving it to the, you know, disabled sailing kids and stuff like that. .. we’ll be fairly strong about what we spend money on. .. We won’t be giving it away to the jazz festival, I can tell you.” (2d)

Communities of interest were some of the more easily recognised constituent communities as the strong common interest at their core helped identify their existence in addition to the differences arising in the boundary processes. The boundaries were not always highly conflictual, however members’ passion for their common interests sometimes resulted in tensions. When members of interest-based communities moved amongst other constituent communities in which they held membership, tensions and alliances were recognised.

5: 1.2.3 Communities of cause

There were many communities of cause within the rural communities. Communities of cause existed around interest in facilities for the community, such as needing an ambulance or the rural town’s presentation, and the use of local land. These purpose based constituent communities arose to forward a particular cause or purpose and as such include RCD constituent communities. There was a set goal and structured steps to achieve the goal to “*make it happen*”. RCD constituent communities are one example of a community of cause introduced in this section, but these will be detailed in the next chapter. This section goes on to describe other cause communities apparent in reaction to commercial development proposals and activities relating to land use.

5: 1.2.3a RCD a community of cause

RCD implementation requires the engagement of rural community members around a particular cause relating to change for the rural community. The following quote demonstrates members understanding of their need for a cause and seeing the RCD as a cause they could embrace. It also highlights the extent to which identity is a significant part of a community of cause and RCD.

".. we wanted to do something for the community, .. we just wanted to be part of it. And I think that sort of enthusiasm was a bit bottled up, so we suddenly had a cause (laughter) which we needed." (2c)

The details of RCD as a cause community are presented in Chapter 6.

5: 1.2.3b Constituent community boundary processes regarding structural development

"Developers" was a term used in all participating rural communities to refer to a community whose cause was structural change within their environment. While these changes impacted the culture of the community, they were commercially rather than socially driven. At times these changes were resisted, particularly where some rural community members thought the change would jeopardise the essence of what they valued about their rural community culture. Those resisting development are described here as a receiving community. Amongst this receiving community there were fears of losing those qualities that were stereotyped of rural communities: knowing each other, a quiet life, laid back, honest and friendly. These members were clear they did not want significant structural change.

".. But then, I'm quite happy for the town to stay the way it is. Oh, did you go down to [small town in neighbouring region]? The big seven storey building right on the water, and all this stuff. .. and I hope that, that sort of stuff won't happen here." (2a)

Instead, their desire and cause was to protect their perceived culture and maintain the status quo.

Where change was considered a threat the response was to want to, or to try to prevent change occurring.

"This motel we're getting here, wanted to go to [Neighbouring rural town]. And the [Neighbouring rural town] Progress Association wrote to the developer and told him that they wouldn't meet him." (1c)

However, a capacity for action was not always possible and where action was thwarted, a strong sense of injustice and deception was experienced within this receiving community. In these situations, it was felt that developers held power to irreversibly change not only the physical look of

the rural community but also valued aspects of the culture, such as open processes and shared control of the shared environment.

"I don't think we'll ever stop it now. Well the first lot .. that were ever built, my niece worked at [Developer] at the time (that's who built them) and I remember when it came out in the papers you know I said to her, '[Niece] we've got to stop this. It's got to be stopped.' And she said, 'Auntie [Name] forget about it. It's been in the pipeline for ten years, it's passed, before it was announced. And we were all sworn to – we had to sign a thing to secrecy, so if it was let out before then that we would be automatically sacked.' And that's when I started to think, 'Oh God this isn't – you know, this isn't how [Rural town] used to work.' " (2e)

Consequently, the boundary between the pro-development community and the receiving community was defined by conflict.

"Now [Developers] are very, very contentious. They're loathed by about half the town ... [Developers] generate some loathing; fear and loathing." (2d)

The boundary was also fluid, at times focused on the community of people physically involved in making the structural change, and yet expanding to include a community of supporters. From the pro-development side of the boundary, non-support was viewed as being 'knockers'. Knockers were part of the receiving community who identified reasons to actively or vocally not support the development project.

"You will always get cynicism from some people .. You will always have your knockers .." (2j)

The dynamic state of the boundary was demonstrated in "knockers" changing membership project by project and over time within a project. Despite long held beliefs about developers, it was felt that resistance would change over time:

"But they'll turn around. A couple of the knockers already have I think." (2a)

Constituent community boundaries relating to commercial structural development in the rural community were very apparent. These were associated with conflict and distrust as community members responded to the changes which appeared out of their control, and the resulting sense of power imbalance.

5: 1.2.3c Constituent community boundary processes relating to land use

Boundaries relating to the use of local land were particularly prominent in two of the participating rural communities. The constituent communities apparent in these processes were based on the value, meaning and identity associated with conservation of natural environments and social history. At least three communities were highlighted and were identified by their core activity in relation to conservation: conservation, forestry and agriculture.

The conservation community had a high representation from the new-comer community while the 'old' community was predominantly forestry or agriculture based. The processes of negotiating activity within the rural communities had led to the boundaries between these constituent communities being historically associated with high conflict, as each sought to act on conflicting core values.

"Now I've got to say that they were slow moving into [Rural town], because we were seen as being really red-necked. You know we were fairly outspoken in regard of the forest industry. .. and the town became fairly renowned for taking a hard line with the so-called 'Greenies' .. [Local] was known as 'Chainsaw [Local]', you know, he'd cut the legs out from under a Greenie any time. That was the passion of the time; it's changed now." (1b)

The fluidity and dynamic nature of constituent community boundaries is again demonstrated in this quote where, with the passage of time the extent of clashing of the boundaries relating to conservation had diminished. However the tension remained and continued to be described:

"Even now this last section they did, like they've bulldozed wetlands. Now how the hell they got away with that I don't know. But they did." (2a)

The conservation community were described from the other side of the boundary as alternative life-stylers that *"don't compromise on anything; won't work with you"*(1c). There was a clear sense of a different value base and resulting actions which were incompatible:

"I don't know, maybe it's just a different type of people. .. But having said that, I've found that, the alternatives real tough, extremely destructive." (1c)

This alternative community was seen as aligned with the political thinking of the Australian Political Greens Party who are dedicated to conservation and responsible environmental management. The Greens foundational values are peace and nonviolence, grassroots democracy, social and economic justice, and ecological sustainability. The values and associated meaning and identity found within this community were not compatible with compromise of their core beliefs about the environment and social issues. Many in the agriculture/forestry community did not understand the foundation of their differences lay in their values, nor why compromise was not given consideration.

“So we have this obstruction point with those people and that where we don’t get together with the Greens and agriculture and forestry because, one party doesn’t co-operate. There’s no, even understanding, trying to understand that an old building is just an old building and it’s had its day and we’ve got to move on.” (1c)

As with previously identified boundaries, fluidity was evident. In addition to the change of practices in land management over time, it was also understood that there was “*mainstream conservation*” approaches within the agricultural and forestry communities.

“You know, well how many platypus and fish did we kill because we didn’t know? We used to shoot wedge-tailed eagles because they were taking the lambs. And now, if I caught a bugger shooting a wedge-tailed eagle I’d lynch them. You know, just life changes. And maybe I think the old hippies stirred our conscious in the finish. We didn’t like it, but we learnt a lot off them. .. And it’s the same with mainstream conservation now. You know, some of the best conservationists I know work within [the forestry] industry, you know, and they’re good at what they do. Then you get extremists on both sides of the argument” (1b)

Identifying the boundaries associated with land use and conservation clearly demonstrated that foundational values differentiated these constituent communities. While heightened conflict arising from negotiating the constituent community boundaries had reduced in recent years, this was only a matter of degree. Tensions continued to exist and arose in RCD processes.

Communities of cause highlighted the importance of values and identity within constituent communities, as the values were closely linked with the purpose for the communities’ existence.

Pursuing a cause was associated with the strength of attachment to the rural community, motivating both action for change and resistance to change.

Section 5:1.2 has outlined some of the constituent communities existing in rural communities as identified in the data. These constituent communities were most easily recognised through differentiation: boundary processes that highlighted how they differed from another community. Boundaries were a fluid process. The purpose of identifying a boundary at the time, determined its position, and thus any description is temporal. Participants acknowledged these communities through descriptors which identified a property of the community such as a value, interest or activity often emphasising the difference to another community.

At times the difference between two constituent communities was highly visible due to boundary differentiation that involved high conflict brought about by the application of the different values held within each community. At other times the differences were less likely to involve conflict, but tensions continue to be boundary processes which highlight the existence of differences.

Additionally, where the values of constituent communities were either compatible or not in conflict, it was more likely for people to hold membership in multiple communities.

Overall, the findings presented in section 5:1 identify that the rural community was geographically defined by all participants. The boundaries were identified through highly visible landmarks, yet were fluid, subject to time and purpose. The community boundaries defined by participants contributed to identity, belonging and action within rural communities. Additionally, there were many constituent communities. While part of the rural community, these held separate identities. Rural and constituent communities had the same boundary identification process through differentiation. Likewise, their boundaries were fluid and temporal. Constituent communities

differed in aetiology, structure and roles. Within the different types of constituent communities, RCD projects are examples of cause communities, established and structured to achieve particular goals.

5: 2. Boundary Processes within Rural Communities

“.. within the services themselves, if you invite people down and you put food on, they’ve broken bread at your table they’re not going to turn you back when you ring.” (3b)

The data elucidates processes of negotiating community boundaries as these constituent communities rub shoulders in the daily life of rural communities. Boundary processes emphasised each communities’ identity and differences from other communities. Some were associated with the communities’ underpinning values. Boundaries processes were found in symbolic expressions of community and through agenda and alignment processes.

5: 2.1 Symbolic expression in boundary processes

The meanings, values and qualities of a community were at times expressed symbolically in language, physical infrastructure or actions. The symbols described in the data were part of the expression of boundary processes associated with the rural and constituent communities.

5: 2.1.1 Symbolic expression of rural community boundaries

Rural community boundaries were emphasised in their symbolic expression through physical structures and landmarks, discourse associated with the geography, and actions highlighting a community’s existence and identity.

The symbolic significance of geographic boundaries was well illustrated in one community that had created a physical structure to mark the “*gateway*” to the community, to symbolise leaving the outside world behind and entering the rural community.

“.. gateway to the [rural area] or whatever. That was originally the idea behind it .. So coming from, you know, where people live into the, [rural] area” (1c)

When it was built twenty years before, the structure and materials held meaning for the community, representing the community identity. With change over time, these symbolic aspects were discussed as having less significance for present residents. As the current significance was discussed between two community members, there was never the option that symbolising the community boundary might no longer be relevant. Instead the focus was on how to physically symbolise the transition in a manner that held meaning within the current rural community and portrayed the essence of the community identity. This symbolic expression was seen as an important message for visitors to the community.

As described in 5:1.1, towns within the rural regions were each associated with various core values and/or activities and the place names had come to represent these values and activities. These symbols of community identity were also presented pictorially on signage at a town’s main entry roads to welcome people to the community. Although one participant had argued for using different floral emblems for different communities within the rural region, community members chose to use images that symbolised something about their community identity.

“.. We’ve got a flower on there .. which is only found in [this regions] forests .. the other towns have done their own logos. [Town 3]’s got a ship, [Town 4] has still got apples .. [Town 5]’s got a swan, [Town 1]’s got a scenery.” (1c)

Water crossings were particularly used as markers in boundary processes. For some it was seen to draw a line between rural town communities with such different values that it symbolised the space between high conflict:

".. You've really got the West Bank, the East Bank and the Gaza Strip you see – that's how it works (laughing). And the river's in the middle." (1b)

Language used to describe the rural communities was symbolic of the experience of and within these communities. Again this was part of defining the rural community identity and its boundaries. Distance and isolation were significant aspects and represented social and economic challenges which were highlighted in the discourse associated with the communities. There were frequent references to the lack of resources and the communities were described as being *"on a road to nowhere"* (1a), *"at the end of the earth"* and *"down there"*.

"The [region name] suffers badly from being at the end of the earth, it really does. .. One thing that I notice down there .. I have lived down there, I know what it's like. I holiday down there. I go down there as often as I can. I know what it's like to live down there and to experience the isolation and the frustration and the social issues that go on there .." (3a)

The discourse was used both by community members and non-members and such joint recognition indicates the discourse was an important aspect of community boundary processes.

The activity of meeting and mixing in a place which can be clearly defined as the town centre, was seen as significant in creating a sense of community and building a strong community identity; a space where there can be regular connection to other members of the rural community within their daily activities.

"One of the reasons, you know like, if people are shopping here it's generating obviously profits for shops, but the other thing it does do is to give a sense of community. People meet when they shop, it's about the only time they'll talk you know, and see one another." (1b)

Members actively set about creating focal points to centralise township activities so that a common connection and sense of community could be fostered. The importance for a main street to symbolise a meeting place was a consideration in each of the rural communities when planning community development.

Members of the rural community sought to symbolically express their community identity. These were found in physical structures such as sculptures or signage to indicate crossing a boundary into and out of the rural community, and were additionally designed to symbolically express something about the nature and experience of the community. At other times natural geographic boundaries such as water courses were attributed symbolic meaning in boundary processes between communities with different lifestyles. Community members' further used language to symbolise the experience of the communities, portraying the impact of isolation and distance in commonly shared phrases that were also recognised by non-members. Central meeting places both symbolised and foster a sense of community.

5: 2.1.2 Symbolic expression of constituent community boundaries

As with the expression of the rural community identity and boundaries, the boundary processes associated with the range of constituent communities were again manifest in language, action and physical symbols.

Language was frequently used in a manner which symbolised constituent community boundaries. Within these communities, the language used was associated with their core activities and values; jargon understood within their community. Non-members did not necessarily understand this terminology. Thus to 'fit in' amongst members of another constituent community, some used the language without understanding the meaning.

"We talk about AFL, about rugby – which I don't know that much about sport, but pretend, because that's the only common language here - besides beer." (3d)

This participant, as an outsider to the community, was very aware of the common language within communities particularly because he was not conversant in the language nor the activities. In this manner jargon symbolised the community boundary.

Boundaries were also symbolised through language in metaphors such as '*the chardonnay set*' or the '*white shoe brigade*' as described in 5:1.2.1e. This use of language highlights the SES boundary

processes, connecting physical appearance and acts - what they wore and drank – to symbolise their values and attitudes. In contrast was a community symbolised in the phrase, *‘the wrong kind of people’*.

“.. I think these kit homes are always the ones that are going to wreck it. .. the only ones that buy them are the ones that can’t afford to buy anything else. So they’re bringing the wrong sort of people. ..” (2a)

This embodied a set of values and actions neither supported by law nor more broadly accepted across the rural community, which was further indicated in references to there being drug problems associated with this community. This community was also represented by the term *“low-lifes” (2d)*. In this manner, symbolic language was part of the process of identifying boundaries.

Other terminology differentiating constituent communities was found in language such as *‘new settlers’* or *‘mainlanders’*, as described in 5:1.2.1a. In the context of these boundary processes the differing perspectives held by these communities was recognised in comparison to the existing or long-timer community:

“I just call them new settlers. .. They bring a whole new perspective, because by and large they’re very professional people .. So they’re thinking differently, a different level to where I’m at altogether.” (1b)

These terms were directly associated with the new perspective and lifestyles of the people they described.

Actions were also used to symbolically express boundaries between constituent communities. Two actions were particularly apparent in the data as having symbolic relevance for community members: breaking bread and sharing the historic identity.

Sharing a meal was seen as symbolising connectedness both within and between constituent communities.

“And basically, I’ve found that with community development within the services themselves, if you invite people down and you put food on, they’ve broken bread at your table ..” (3b)

The term '*broken bread*' had symbolic spiritual or religious connotations, and suggested trust and faith, expressing the significance, meaning and intimacy associated with these boundary processes in aligning two communities. It was anticipated that having broken bread, communities would help each other when called on.

Ancestry within the rural communities was significant and was recognised through using long-timers' family names in the naming of streets in a township. The symbolic expression of the importance of historical memory (as described in 1.2.1a) acknowledges the significance of the long-timer community within the rural community.

"And the chap that opened it, he was – he's an old identity, he's well in his eighties. And the street that the [RCD resource]'s in is named after his family - which was lovely for him to open it [the resource]." (2e)

Other boundary processes were found in sculpture and art as an expression of community identity. In one rural community, sculptures were created to represent the various constituent communities. The sculptures were important to the respective community memberships.

".. we actually did community consultation for the different groups and they designed their own sculptures and then we as artists created them. But the energy and support that came from those people – when we were casting them .. people were standing around, you know, for a whole day waiting to see .." (3a)

Another artistic symbolic expression was creating individualised star accordion fold-out books developed to represent a sense of belonging in the community. It was hoped such expression would foster and strong sense of identity:

"And it's basically – because all of the young people have to leave their local communities for further education: all of them have to be moved on. So it's actually making them identify what home is and bring in that strong sense of personal identity and sense of belonging, so that when they do leave they've got something to draw back on." (3a)

Uniforms were also used to represent belonging to a particular constituent community.

".. the Green Jackets, this is another group of volunteers. .." (1c)

The term Green Jackets was used when referring to this community. They were no longer described by their activities, but instead their uniform symbolised their role.

Members of constituent communities developed symbolic expressions of belonging and difference. Language was frequently used, through commonly recognised phrases, as symbols that created a pictorial representation of the meaning and identity associated with belonging to that community. Jargon within communities also symbolised boundaries. Actions and ritual were important and those found in the data related to building and acknowledging alignments between communities. Physical representations such as sculptures, art, uniforms and signage were present in boundary processes, portraying the essence, significance or identity in belonging to a constituent community.

Within the boundary processes in the data, many of the symbolic expressions occurred as a demonstration or acknowledgement of difference to another community. This was particularly so when people were connecting across boundaries and visiting another community. There was a sharing of the experience of one community with another. The various expressions offered a message to those not of the community, symbolically expressing the significance, identity and meaning in belonging to the community. Other symbolic expressions were aids to the boundary process of alignment, highlighting the significance of connecting one community with another, and acknowledging the identity provided by existing community memberships.

5: 2.2 Agendas as boundary processes

Amid the constituent communities, agendas associated with the purpose, values, meaning and identity of belonging to the community, were frequently evident. These underlying principles, motives or ideals (Oxford English Dictionary 2007) were held either individually or collectively, and informed how individuals or communities interacted.

The existence of agendas was apparent as constituent community activities and roles within the rural community were discussed. Members rarely described the motivations behind their collective activities as an agenda. Yet, for example, economic growth for the town was described by all members of one constituent community interviewed, as being the underlying motive for their activity.

".. it gives people the reason not to go to [Regional town]. .. And that is the thing that I could see really benefiting us here [rural town] as a business .." (2h)

At times agendas were spoken of directly, particularly where they were identified as benefiting an individual.

"Someone obviously had their own agenda, and more obviously going to get something out this if they could stand up and say, 'We're doing this, and I'm doing this' or whatever. .." (3e)

Agendas represented the meaning a boundary held for that community; the significant components of belonging and identity associated with community membership. Community values actioned as community agendas were particularly apparent where there were conflicting agendas between communities.

".. you have alternative life style development over there, and there tends to be a bit of a you know, we've got our ideas, you've got yours and they don't mix together." (1c)

The difference between each community's "ideas" (pointing to the underpinning agendas) was raised, identifying a boundary process of conflict. The presence of the agenda signified the process of maintaining, negotiating or constructing a boundary. In this manner, the agenda highlighted the importance of individual and collective identity and meaning associated with being in community.

In voicing values and ideals, members were negotiating the existing community values or establishing a new community based in those values. These could be adopted in full or part. When a member's values clashed, this identified and maintained the community boundary. That member had to choose either to adopt different values and meaning or to not continue within that community, instead finding a new community where such values were expressed:

“By being involved in .. your local committees. .. And you’ll get your own point of view. .. if you’re influential or you know what you’re talking about, people will listen to you and you can then steer it .. But .. if you don’t fit you’re pushed out. ..” (1c)

The following outlines three examples of constituent community agendas. Given communities are more apparent at their boundary of difference with other communities, many were presented in contrast to another community value set. Conflicting agendas between constituent communities highlighted that agendas were about values, meaning and identity. RCD constituent community values and agendas are presented in Chapter 6.

5: 2.2.1 Forestry/agriculture and Green/alternative agendas

As presented in 5:1.2.3b, there were clear boundary processes active between the conservation and forestry communities. Conflict between the two was high, and emotive language was used by members of each community about the other, intimating the strength of meaning the issues presented for members.

The differing values of these communities were highlighted by this conflict which was visible to the general public, even influencing where people chose to live. These communities were unable to compromise the core values that identified their community. For the Greens the values were centred in environmental and social issues, while within forestry and agricultural communities the orientation was resources and resource management.

5: 2.2.2 ‘Progressive’ development and social values agendas

Two distinct agendas emerged relating to the concept of progress. An economic and regional development agenda with a strong focus on growing business with the related community benefits, and a social agenda focused on maintaining infrastructure associated with historical memory within the rural community and the community status quo.

“Effectively I’m thinking there was then a significant increase in land values .. And that brought with it a wave of new investors and a different style of person. .. And really um [Rural town] and community changed, but with change of course comes adversity. And there was bit

of adversity, property developers were being challenged by the traditional land owners and all types.” (2i)

These agendas were clarified as different value orientations to the seemingly akin forestry or Green agendas. The below quotes voice that pro-development is not necessarily pro-forestry and development is not necessarily anti-Green, yet also demonstrates a strong perceived alignment.

“.. And I mean he has a lot of respect within most of the community. Because of his, he’s pro forestry, he doesn’t have that [respect] with the anti-forestry group. But, you know, well he’s pro-development rather than just pro-forestry. ..” (1a)

“.. It’s not a for or against Green or anything, it’s a, to keep progress moving you’ve got to be receptive to change and new ideas and a lot of those people aren’t.” (1c)

Where an economic agenda was part of the constituent community’s values, the associated discourse focused on the benefits of these activities in terms of the economic improvements for the rural community:

“So that will benefit the local businesses which in turn, all local businesses which are successful are putting money back into the community either directly or indirectly. .. So I think it will add to the affluence of the town. Because of the structure, and that is that most of the profits go back into the community, I think it will help to knit the community together.” (2c)

As a secondary advance, social benefit was considered a likely flow-on effect of economic benefit, through the rural community potentially experiencing increased social cohesion in the process.

In contrast to this economic focus, was an agenda placing more weight on valuing and ensuring an historical memory. This value was apparent in the desire to preserve both buildings or landmarks which might otherwise be demolished for ‘progress’, and also the low key approach to life which was considered synonymous and was thus stereotyped as part of the rural identity and way of life (described in 1.2.1a). This valuing of the rural lifestyle did not exclude change and growth but involved seeking to contain it, letting it develop slowly so it did not change the life style abruptly for those who had a lengthy connection with the rural community:

“And that’s where some of the board people from Melbourne and that, probably see it different .. [Growth] at all costs type thing more than, hang on lets service what we’ve got and let it grow natural.” (2a)

Progressive and social agendas were often contrasted, highlighting the existence of these boundary processes within the rural communities. Participants all described an affinity with one set of values more strongly than another and were clear where their values lay. The following quote is an example of how, for some, social interaction and belonging was valued far more than a commercial agenda. Experiencing an embodiment of both values firsthand brought opportunity for decision-making as part of boundary processes. People chose membership based on the agendas associated with the different communities.

“I went onto the committee, because I was encouraged by a group of members who are not on the committee to try to steer it into much more of a commercial direction .. After about 6 months, I was being deeply involved in everything that was happening. It was such a joy to be in an environment that was totally volunteer .. it created an environment and an atmosphere in the club which you could never create commercially. So I (laughing) I decided I don’t want this job, I don’t want to destroy this club, I want it to stay as it is (laughing). .. But it’s one of the friendliest ones I’ve ever been to and anyone can walk in there on a Friday night, and you’ll be immediately introduced to other people and picked up. .. And we’ve got a comparison, because the [another sporting] club .. is a fully fledged commercial operation and it’s absolutely dead. I mean it’s awful. You go in there any day and there’s hardly anybody there and there’s a little cliques on a few tables ..” (2c)

The discourse around an agenda for progress and economic development was focused on the economic benefits available to the community, yet also connected social benefits as a secondary outcome. A contrasting agenda placed social values first, both in maintaining a sense of history with a connection and respect for the past, and maintaining a lifestyle that valued social interaction, connectedness and belonging ahead of commercial benefit. The presence of the different agendas signified the existence of boundary processes occurring between constituent communities, founded

in the values they represented. When presented with actioning these agendas, people usually made a clear decision about which side of the boundary they belonged at that point in time.

5: 2.2.3 Funding source agendas and the community voice

Funding for projects came with the agendas of the funding source. Local committees held values and agendas about local community control that were constantly being balanced with funders' agendas.

Funding source agendas identified included: ensuring a preferred identity was clear in project names; achieving outcomes usually determined quantitatively; seeking community sector involvement to secure project success through the anticipated contribution of passion and local financial support; and seeking partnerships and linkages. As exemplified below, these were frequently linked back to local, state or commonwealth government strategic documents that were used to determine the outcomes and benchmarking to be met by projects.

"But all this is part of the Tasmania Together policy, it all boils back to the Tasmania Together. .. I mean if you look at that you'll see that all these things that [we] do is really is based on that document." (3f)

Community members were very aware of funder agendas and consciously worked to balance them with their own agendas. These boundary processes were a source of frustration when members felt that if given greater local determination of the activities, funder outcomes could be achieved at the same time as meeting other community needs. Three sets of agendas were often juggled, that of government policy, funding sources and the local voice.

"I guess we were frustrated that they didn't see the advantage to them in what we were doing. You know, we are the local eyes and ears, and if we can score some points for them and still do our other jobs, still get the numbers which is what they were interested in. .. it gives what they [government] want, [funders] get what they want and the community gets what they want. So I just think they should just cut us loose, and let us do what we're doing." (1a)

These were just some examples of conflicting agenda's which identified the boundary processes between constituent communities. All participants clearly described their communities' agendas, though not using the term agenda unless associated with a negative influence. The agendas embodied the values that connect with members' identity, and were not considered something that could be compromised. Members felt strongly about these values, defending and thus highlighting the boundaries when conflicting agendas met.

5: 2.3 Alignments in boundary processes

Boundary processes relating to the nature of communities' associations with one another will be described as alignments. For a constituent community or community member to be aligned means either being within the same community boundary, or being able to negotiate a boundary to find sufficient agreement/similarity such that the two communities can be seen to have support towards an action, value or ideal. These negotiations are founded in values and meaning. Alignments are examples of the successful negotiation of community boundaries to achieve a purposed result. There was also active non-alignment, at times involving conflict with other communities. Non-alignment was evident where a community did not want to be seen as being associated with another, usually in direct response to differing values, agendas and related activities.

While there were many examples of alignments and non-alignments in the data, the boundary processes of understanding and navigating these was not always a conscious process. However some were very aware of the existence of alignments between constituent communities.

".. And so, you know, you work out the best way to do something and then you've got to take the politics and the alliances and things into account before you work out how to implement it." (3c)

The preceding quote indicates an understanding of the importance of alignments within the rural community. The following quote presents the boundary process of building alignments: mixing amongst other constituent communities, understanding their activities, and identifying differences

and common links networking with ‘the right’ people or communities, that is, those who can further the community’s purpose.

“Like they came down last Saturday for something and I can take the day off or I can, yeah, get things done. .. And if you don’t go you miss out. .. And that’s what it’s all about – it’s that networking and being there.” (1a)

The following presents some alignments that were found in the data.

5: 2.3.1 Individuals in constituent community alignments

Most alignments observed were between individuals of different communities rather than officially between the collective memberships of constituent communities. There were many examples of individuals from cause communities creating alignments with individuals from other constituent communities to facilitate project outcomes.

Various people were described as having alignments across the rural community. This became important where there was need to engage support.

*“And **because** she’s a local person, she brought with her huge experience of how to get the community in volume.” (2c, participant’s emphasis)*

All participants found members’ vocations to be significant in facilitating access to other communities and building alignments and support.

“.. And because he was [a formal community leader] and he’s a great community worker, he’s able to engage a lot of community just from who he is.” (1a)

One cause community found a member’s alignment with the media to be particularly useful in promoting activities.

“I think a guy like [Member], his contacts in the media, you know, that helped a lot too.” (2g)

While another relied on a member’s alignment with the arts community to understand the dynamics and alignments within the rural community.

“I was with the Arts before I came here so I have contacts with all these Regional Arts people on the [rural area]. Now I don’t do anything on the [rural area] unless I actually talk to a few

of those key people, because they give me the heart and soul. And they also tell me the truth.”
(3a)

This quote not only pointed to the role of alignments to facilitate access to resources, but also the need for information to be able to navigate these alignments and thus inform the negotiation of boundaries.

5: 2.3.2 Multiple membership and alignment

Given the small population within rural communities, individuals with multiple memberships across constituent communities were frequently a part of the boundary processes in alignments. All participants spoke of other constituent communities of which they had been or were currently members. Multiple membership highlighted the values that formed the basis of alignments.

It was frequently acknowledged that it is often the same people making things happen in the rural community.

“.. in country towns there’s a small core of people in different spots of the town at different levels socially, doing different things, but it’s a real small group of people that are making things happen. Whether it be making sure the potholes get filled or the golf course gets cut, the bowling green gets cut or there’s enough people for the dart team at the RSL Club.” (1b)

Consequently some constituent communities within rural areas had similar membership, yet with a different purpose for existing.

“I’m also a member of [cause community] .. and these two other committees are made up from people on that committee as well because that’s the only way to do it on the rural area – a small population.” (3f)

Given the almost identical membership in the preceding scenario these communities were not identifiable by the specific individuals involved, nor conflicting values previously identified as frequently demonstrating difference. The purpose and agendas were the differentiating aspect of the boundary process defining these communities.

Three values were apparent in alignments associated with multiple memberships: a positive welcoming environment for the rural community; the rural community shaping its own destiny; and social interaction as a community cornerstone. The development or maintenance of a positive environment included the economic, social and physical aspects; ensuring viability from all these perspectives.

".. they also see that they have got a viable little community and they worked up to get things, and have a safe community. You know, all the social things." (2g)

The agenda was further evident in discussions about improving amenities through land care and street scaping projects, as well as the creation of central focal points that felt inviting and would thus facilitate community activities, events and gathering points for social interaction.

Another underpinning value was about communities having control of their own destiny.

"And we talk about community development, but that's community development, when you let the community control their destiny." (3d)

This was highlighted as important not only in valuing self-determination and ownership, but also in enabling the rural community to respond to their challenges. The following quote demonstrates that where an active local voice was able to 'stand- up' for the community wishes, it was valued and appreciated.

".. And yeah, but the town come together with that, even the new people, you know stuck together and said, 'No.' .. We're very, very lucky. Very lucky." (2e)

It was expressed by some that local action needed to occur at the risk of making mistakes.

"If we want to go and do that, experimental, and waste three or four thousand dollars, they still let us do it. .. because that keeps that originality and that will keep them going." (1c)

This quote also demonstrates that maintaining local control was seen to be an important aspect of maintaining engagement in cause communities. Maintaining engagement was in turn seen to increase the capacity of rural communities to respond to challenges.

Social interaction was another common value underpinning alignments associated with multiple memberships across interest and cause based constituent communities. One example was the role of sporting communities in bringing people together and facilitating interacting socially, aside from the competition.

*".. they're pretty important, not to win or lose cricket matches or football matches but as a place for society to gather and mix and then go through. .. it's just an extension of society."
(1b)*

In addition to sporting communities, this agenda was seen as underpinning most RCD constituent communities and their activities. It was not the activities per se, but the social and boundary processes that they enable which held ongoing value to members.

".. Now for the community the outcome is going to be the putting on of the night, but .. we're going to be establishing relationships with people in all the towns. .. To me that's community development in a small scale, in action, bringing people together of, from all different walks of life, creating connections, doing fund raising activities and all of that sort of stuff. .." (3b)

As alignments were founded in common values across communities, even when they were through multiple memberships, the associated identity with each community remained intact for the member of the alignment. This was particularly true for constituent cause communities and was demonstrated in participants maintaining their social patterns and only interacting as a community when furthering the cause.

".. But beyond that we, you know we don't meet socially, we seem to see each other at board meetings and that's it. Whereas I suppose we've all got our own group of friends. And that's the way it goes." (2j)

The examples of alignments in these sections (5:2.3.1 and 5:2.3.2) indicate that alignment boundary processes were not about reconstructing boundaries or meaning in communities, but about links, and connections, building on networks, bringing the communities identifiably alongside another in the path of their activities. These connections were either existing due to membership across

multiple communities, or were purpose built. In both cases, the alignments were utilised to facilitate the cause.

5: 2.3.3 Formal community alignments

Alignments formally acknowledged between collectives were observed. These constituent community boundary processes were also based around a common value, or need.

The data provides examples of alignments between sporting communities and schools, cause communities and schools, local councils and cause communities, and between various cause communities. Some communities were aligned in response to the need for similar facilities, infrastructure or resources. In these instances working collaboratively achieved the desired gain within each community while reducing costs and resources, for example, in sharing buildings.

“We’ve put two of our sports centres into the schools and they’re community, joint community/ education department. .. it saved us having to have an empty sports centre somewhere, or having, trying to get community people to run them ..” (1c)

It was also evident in sharing administrative resources whereby paid administration provided support to volunteer community endeavours through maintaining secretarial requirements.

“.. and Council provide administrative and material support to the group, taking care of agendas, minutes, actions arising from meetings and ensuring adherence to terms of reference and matters of procedure.” (1c)

Other alignments were founded around a common interest or value. One example of this was a constituent community’s engagement with a local primary school.

“.. [Rural town] Primary school, we’re going to support the newsletter, where, we’re going to support their events like school fetes, graduation dinners. We’re going to do a monthly award for students which have done something, probably outside their comfort zone. ..” (2b)

Within both communities, communication and social interaction was valued, as was celebrating personal growth and achievements. There was accordingly a sharing of resources and infrastructure to encourage these values in the children of the rural community.

Mutual benefit was important in many alignments between collectives. All the preceding examples had mutual benefit for the communities involved. The support given to the school returned a benefit to the cause community by raising their profile in the hope of increased membership from young families. This was a stated agenda:

“You know, we wanna I suppose, encourage the younger families to sort of support us as well.”
(2b)

Alignments at a collective level were facilitated through multiple memberships of members. Two cause communities had some shared membership with the local business association. However the new cause community stepped out and actioned a broader membership around a specific activity and ideals. So while aligned and maintaining membership overlap, they were not identified as the same constituent community. Another example was two separate initiatives with predominantly the same membership and similar interests. One initiative was a government led process for a co-ordinated community response, whereas the other was a grass-roots response to a common experience which highlighted a community need. They expected to benefit from the collectives’ alignment due to the ease of shared knowledge through the shared membership:

“.. people involved in the [cause community] will be involved with the [government]’s initiative as well, so yeah in some ways it will overlap. Which is a good thing because you can have the same people on the committee for both initiatives ..” (3f)

Alignments between collectives involved boundary processes similar to those described in individual based alignments. The foundation was in common values or purpose and often included multiple membership. Collective level alignments were more likely to have a stronger focus on the mutual benefit for the communities involved.

5: 2.3.4 Active non-alignment

In contrast to alignments were when community members actively sought to demonstrate difference or incompatibility with another community. Such processes will be described as active

non-alignments. In the data, the most prominent examples of active non-alignment were when some members were associated with forestry or real estate development.

An active non-alignment between Forestry and Green constituent communities affected the activities and acceptance of other establishing constituent communities. The mistrust stemming from the different value base of each community, led to active non-alignment with new constituent communities when a founding member was seen as being aligned with one or the other set of values. In the example below, the speaker belonged to the forestry community as well as an establishing cause community.

"It wasn't easy because there was this mistrust in the community sometimes too. Like you'd get people – there was this bloke at [rural town] wouldn't [associate with the cause activities] because I was on the board. And .. yeah it happened to other board members as well." (1b)

In the absence of obvious values held by an establishing constituent community, onlookers first saw the founding members' membership within other constituent communities and anticipated alignment of values. Judgement was then made, which in the preceding cases led to active non-alignment, even though the new community's purpose, values and existence was unrelated to a forestry or green agenda.

Similar issues arose with developers. As a cause community was perceived as being aligned with a developer, other constituent communities actively non-aligned, preferring not to be associated with a community that held contrasting values. The strength of sentiment by some was apparent in their description of developers as *"the main street mafia"* (2d). One response by a cause community was to actively non-align with the developers. This was done in regular communication and media.

".. this is where it is, behind [developer]. So that in itself is a problem because people think it's part of [developer] .. which has put a lot of people off. Although I had to work fairly hard at saying 'we are not [developer], we are not [developer], we are not [developer]. Just 'cos it's in the same building, just because [developer] built it. Nothing to do with [developer]." (2d)

One cause community considered people's reaction to differing values and discussed alignments and non-alignments.

".. and there were accusations that, oh, you know, that [developer], well I shouldn't mention names but you know, particular people you know, that they possibly shouldn't be involved and another should." (2g)

While in the above quote there was a hesitancy to discuss potential conflict, others were less hesitant in directly addressing where the active non-alignment lay.

".. So it's old people with pig-headed ideas that are really out-dated that were causing trouble. They were the 'anti' group I suppose you'd call them." (2h)

Active non-alignment, as with alignment, was founded in the values and meaning associated with constituent communities. Where there had been previous conflict, mistrust developed affecting membership of new constituent communities. Even perceived alignments caused others to actively non-align with cause community activities. In response, the cause community actively non-aligned with constituent communities with contentious value sets.

In summary, membership to constituent communities was founded in the values and ideals associated with each community. Recognising these was thus an important part of the boundary processes for new constituent communities. Any potential alignment between communities affected the overall rural community fabric as the new community was actively avoided or targeted in an attempt to renegotiate alignments. Mistrust and/or conflict can occur amongst community members within or between constituent communities, brought about by the new communities' alignments, real or perceived. This can have a strong personal impact for members as well as a collective impact and response. Accordingly, communities were active in identifying the impact of various alignments and at times sought to non-align as a protective response. Perceived or real alignment of a constituent community with a developer or forestry interests was a source of conflict.

5: 3. Conclusion

RCD occurs within the context of the dynamics of the rural communities in which it takes place. A number of key dynamics and understandings were found which as well as defining the parameters of community in the research, illuminated important underlying processes. These included the functioning and interaction of rural communities and constituent communities. As part of the rural communities, a multiplicity of communities were visible through members' interactions with each other. These interactions included boundary processes of symbolic expression, agendas and alignments or non-alignments, all of which were founded in values and meaning, and connected to members' identity individually and collectively. RCD was observed as a constituent cause community subject to the same community boundary processes. The next chapter details the processes of establishing an RCD community within the dynamics detailed in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Rural Community Development as a Constituent Cause Community

Findings Part 2

".. It wasn't about a [rural community development project], it was about a sense of community." (1b)

This chapter maps the dynamics and boundary processes associated with implementing rural community development (RCD) as a new cause based constituent community. RCD communities were established through boundary processes in identity formation, including differentiation with other constituent communities, leadership, collective power, alignments, agendas and symbolic expression. The chapter identifies the structure and workings of community ownership and support as different functions in RCD, and closes with a comparison of these processes in the study projects.

6: 1. RCD as a Constituent Community

The implementation of RCD involved the establishment of a new constituent cause community, with the common vision, interest, beliefs and values that shape a collective identity and give meaning to those involved.

Rural communities are in a constant state of change and can therefore only be defined and described at any one point in time. Members were aware of and described constant change.

"I was starting to tell you about it being a disparate community. It began as a fishing village .. and people who worked in the pub .. it gradually grew to become a dormitory suburb as electricians, plumbers, you know, your 30 year olds that were successful .. it then became attractive to city people to come .. So it's not a static community .." (2d)

Establishing a new constituent community effected further change in the fabric of the rural community. In response to external economic requirements for the development projects, the

boundaries of their rural communities were expanded from the town communities (for example, described in the preceding quote) to the broader rural region initially identified (see 5: 1.1). Funding options for RCD were offered within the neo-liberal framework of effectiveness, efficiency and value for money. To achieve a recognisable and economically viable community that met the criteria for funding required small communities to join and form a common identity and sense of community based in a broader rural community. RCD community members endeavoured to lead and manage this process through representation within the project committees.

“We’ve got [Town 1], [Town 2], [Town 3] and [Town 4] just across there. So yes, the steering committee have people representing those.” (2b)

RCD thus emerged as a constituent community of each rural community township and simultaneously of a broader rural community. As well as affecting rural community fabric, this demonstrates how constituent community boundaries are not entirely contained within the rural communities of which they are a part.

The below quote describes constituent communities arising amongst existing “linkages”.

“The community - groups establish for a social reason, then you have different groups forming as a reaction for something. So you have basically the people who want to take on a bit of social action, that’s when you have those groups. But you already have those linkages.” (3b)

That RCD cause communities emerged amongst community *linkages*, suggests a process of traversing and forming new boundaries. While most participants described projects as a series of events, some observed boundary processes at work, describing the “*motives*” or agendas, and alignments or “*who’s siding with who*”.

“.. I sit back and I like to watch the dynamics in the room. It’s very interesting to, you know, looked at and understand what the players and meetings are doing and what the motives are and who’s siding with who and you know, what’s the rationale for that.” (2g)

Community boundaries were negotiated to establish a new constituent community around the cause, beliefs and values that enabled development activity. Influences of leadership and the

process of ownership and support interacted as the communities were established. The outcomes of these interactions impacted the extent to which the membership of cause communities' achieved project goals. These dynamics are detailed in the following.

6: 2. Leaders and Constituent Communities

Community leaders were readily identified as important within the boundary processes of forming RCD communities. Leaders were particularly influential in establishing momentum, values and identity within the constituent community.

Participants described rural community members (RCM) who were active in community development activities. While many people were involved in and supported activities in the rural community, some stood out as instigators across a range of community interests and needs.

".. [RCM] tends to hear an idea, works it out, and works out whether it's any good for the town and picks it up and runs with it. And that's not only been the [current RCD] but a range of, a whole host of things .." (1b)

These rural community leaders were characterised as *"movers and shakers"* (2c; 1b) or *"local champions"* (1c). They offered leadership in bringing people together to form cause communities, pursuing their ideas and interests that would benefit the rural community. Leaders built connections and alignments with people across the rural community due to their activities and this facilitated further opportunities and activity.

"So [RCM]'s certainly leading this and driving this, with the support of the local people. ... she has those connections, so she's a link to bringing people together." (3e)

While at times such leaders held official community leadership roles, for example in councils, it was not holding an official position which created momentum, but how the person related within the community.

"I mean, you know talking about personalities, you take someone like [RCM]. Now it doesn't matter whether [RCM]'s the mayor or whether he's not, he's going to have a following." (3c)

The role of informal leaders was considered to be equivalent to formal positions, and were described as “*defacto Mayor*” (2d) or “*unofficial Mayor*” (2j).

Community leaders in their passion and activity tended to hold multiple memberships across various constituent communities. In this manner they were instrumental in the creation of alignments. Because of their connections and initiative, leaders were often sought out by other instigators of development projects, to join the respective fledgling cause communities.

“And [RCM] was the same or similar. ‘cos she was pretty flat out with [another RCD activity], seemed like she hasn’t got time anyway. .. But yeah we were actually asked to join the committee.” (3a)

People active in RCD were predominantly drawn from amongst the ‘seniors’ constituent communities, particularly retirees. There was a sense that older people became involved because they were retired, so not only have time but were looking for something to be a part of or belong to:

“.. most of our people are older people who are looking for something to become part of” (1c)

They had experience and knowledge that they wanted to contribute to the rural community and in response to this desire, offered leadership within RCD communities:

*“So I think you’ve got, I don’t know what proportions, but it seems to me a large number of the retirees **want** to be involved in community projects, and I’ve had a number of people who I don’t know very well, who have approached me and said is there any way in which you can help. So, and **they** bring skills.” (2c, participant emphasis)*

This quote also highlights that feature-based constituent communities were important in RCD community processes.

By becoming involved in RCD activities, retirees offered leadership in their skill areas. This leadership was apparent to the small number of younger members. They described the experience as being guided by older members who had knowledge and skills from their previous activities that informed the RCD communities’ processes:

*"I mean yeah, as I said it was such an eye opener to me and probably [Member], 'cos we're the two youngest. It was just totally different anyway. So we were really just following the flow and doing what they **do**, sort of thing more than anything. Like [Older member], he probably steered the ship a lot." (2a, participant emphasis)*

RCD communities began with a small core of leaders who were involved in the inception of the project idea, and then followed them through to implementation and completion.

".. So there were actually three of us from the local business association and we were the ones who were driving that, basically in there from day one." (2f)

The small group of leaders set about turning dreams into reality.

"Now it probably wouldn't have gone much further than a bit of a dream if it hadn't been for people like [Member 1], [Member 2] and then later on [Member 3]. They were the three drivers for it." (1b)

These leaders gained support from others, yet continued on when others withdrew, maintaining the momentum until broader interest returned.

".. the steering committee I guess ran hot and cold as well. .. [Member] and I just kept going. [Member] said 'we're going to do it. We're going to get there' and I kept at it." (1a)

The passion, determination, generosity, commitment and significant input of time and hard work contributed by these people were frequently described.

".. they're passionate about their community and they feel as though they can contribute and give something back." (3a)

They had a determination in pursuing the activity they believed in and did not consider that it might not be achieved.

"I never ever got to the point of saying 'this isn't going to happen'. You know I suppose maybe that's why it did happen, 'cos I didn't let that happen. You know, I just kept going." (1c)

The preceding quote refers to a project which, took four years to achieve the key goal, yet the leaders did not appear to waver on their belief in what they were doing and its ultimate success.

Such persistence among community leaders was a common feature and those displaying it were sometimes described by participants as having a 'community activity' personality.

"There are certain people who are community oriented .. Community activists are active in anything, like the football club and all that sort of stuff." (2d)

These people were understood to 'naturally' become involved in community activity.

"People who are, they're natural volunteers, in community .." (3a)

Participants were also aware of it within themselves.

".. but then I'm a bit of a beast for that [being involved in community activity]." (2i)

And again attributed it to their personality.

"I think it's probably part of the personality thing, and I think that that's what I've always done .." (2c)

However it was not expected that leaders would always persist. Although seen as a natural approach for their personality, it was considered that certain conditions enabled people with these traits to thrive and progress projects. Leaders needed a belief in the cause, but the quote below suggests that it was also important to feel connected and be able to share both the vision and work.

"It is a personality type, and it's whether you're optimistic, positive, can be proactive and you want to contribute to your community. Now there's only a small section in a community who have all of those attributes, and it depends entirely on whether they are supported and feel part of a connected team as to whether they continue and manage to survive or whether they go, 'Nuh.'" (3a)

Indeed, leaders reached times where they were clear that without this sense of team and connection, they would focus their energies elsewhere.

".. unless I got their commitment and their passionate support for doing the thing, I was going to say, 'Thank you, but no thank you. Figure it out amongst yourselves.' This is very much a team work approach where everybody's contributing something, whether it's time or resources, or a role or information." (3a)

Where there was an environment in which passion and commitment could flourish, the vision became the focus, and hard work and frustration were accepted as a part of the process, by leaders

and those around them. In one committee, the leaders established weekly meetings to pursue their dream, which while providing some irritations, was not seen as unreasonable.

"It didn't seem like it was onerous because we had this dream, goal, whatever you want to call it .. Well that was my feeling on it anyway. I mean I sometimes, I, you know, get a little bit peeved after, ah, you know, ah, (disgruntled muttering sounds) 'didn't we do that last week'. But, overall it was, you know, an enjoyable process." (2g)

Decisions like holding weekly meetings were not questioned, and nor was the level of contribution required to achieve the goals in the time frames encouraged by the leaders.

"We've all done, you know, heaps. Well probably time and energy and effort and cost and everything like that never come into it, it was just a matter of it needs to be done, so it gets done." (2h)

Collectively there was a willingness to put in the hard work and accept whatever annoyances were involved.

".. at the moment we're doing the hard slog .. You know, getting our policies in place, all that sort of stuff, which is really, you know, it's a pain. It's painful, but it's got to be done." (2g)

Even when the commitment meant sacrificing other activities for a period, the cause community values fostered by the leaders were accepted.

"Everyone made the sacrifice .." (2i)

However as the hard work and input continued, it at times resulted in leaders feeling they had completed their role.

"I've served my three years of solitude. It was good fun though, I've got to say." (1b)

This reflection indicates that while there was pleasure gained from being involved in the RCD community, the substantial workload was likened to a sentence being served and so a break was needed. Thus even with the passion and commitment, upon perceived completion of the initial goal these leaders were often ready to pass the ongoing maintenance of the RCD community to other or new members. Some leaders reflected on their keenness to instigate new activity with less interest in ongoing maintenance:

".. I mean that's been my job, all my life, I mean basically all I've done is implement. .. I don't think I'd be very good on a board. I'd be too impatient, I couldn't, now .." (2c)

Participants felt a need to be part of something and to have a cause.

".. we wanted to do something for the community, .. we just wanted to be part of it. And I think that sort of enthusiasm was a bit bottled up, so we suddenly had a cause (laughter) which we needed." (2c)

This links to the need to feel connected which was identified as an important condition in maintaining activity. A similar motivation was to be involved with other people.

".. so it's exciting to me because I can actually get involved with local people and organisations .." (2b)

Further, motivations were seen as wanting to be part of the action.

".. I like to be part of the action." (2f)

At other times it was expressed simply as "loving" what they did.

".. You know I just love working for the community. .. I've got a lot more things I want to do .." (2e)

These people described the satisfaction, sense of achievement and sense of community they experienced through their contribution to the community.

".. I've always been involved in this stuff for a long time, and ah I always enjoy helping communities. I don't know, gives you a sense of satisfaction." (2g)

".. I have a passion for people working together to solve problems and come up with solutions. I find that all of the community work that I've done, and most of it has been as a volunteer, that's what is going to be my drive and sense of achievement." (3a)

The traits and motivations described above are also expressed as values within some cause communities (detailed within Agendas 5:2.2 and Alignments 5:2.3). Leaders were significant in developing the identity, values and meaning of an establishing RCD community. These traits and attitudes of leaders were frequently adopted within the constituent community, becoming part of the collective identity and the experience of community members.

Some participants reflected that the passion and drive of community leaders was also influenced by an Australian culture of mateship and “*having a go*”.

“The biggest thing for any community is that if the community will go out and get it, they will get it. That’s what it’s all about. I think as Aussie’s, I think we’ve all got that. It’s part of our spirit and our existence. You know, help each other to get something and that’s it.” (2g)

This experience within the RCD communities was also considered to have had a collective effect in the rural community.

“I think, yeah, well the community as a whole have learnt that yes, if you want to do something you can do it. That’s a general thing, but I think that everyone’s learnt that.” (2g)

The individual interest or desire became a collective experience built on a belief in the shared purpose or vision and was linked to a ‘can do’ approach.

“I still think that the biggest thing is that, you know, a group of people got together with a vision and, you know, it became, you know, once it was worked out, or realised that we could do something, ah let’s roll up the sleeves and do it. I think that’s been the biggest thing of all.” (2g)

When activities became difficult, this shared vision motivated and facilitated the persistence. The collective experience included a trust in each other and a belief in their role within the rural community.

“.. You know you’ve really got to forget what people are you know, saying behind your back and you’ve just got to say, ‘Well this is what I believe. And this is the way I’m going.’ Yes just keep moving forwards. .. And as I say, I have so much faith in the other committee members, that they all believe in their part and, yeah.” (2e)

This extended to a belief in the constituent community which was perpetuated as they could see their purpose being achieved.

“Well the, pause initially I think it just started out as a, you know, let’s see if we can make it happen, right. And then gradually we started believing in ourselves I guess. That we could achieve, and the more we went on the more we thought we could achieve it ..” (2g)

The overall experience became a sense of collective confidence and enthusiasm:

“So we had this level of confidence and enthusiasm as a group.” (2c)

Thus participants expressed that through leaders’ motivation combined with the “*have a go*” Australian culture, the motivation and passion for a project became part of the collective experience of the RCD constituent community. This positive experience was expressed by leaders and felt by others in the community, but whereas leaders talked about a sense of achievement or satisfaction, other community members described experiencing a ‘collective energy’ which built its own momentum.

“So that’s what I mean, if you get a collection of people around you who are supportive and who are all proactive towards the same cause then the power of that collective energy, it just can’t be stopped. And that’s a wonderful thing to actually be part of.” (3a)

This collective energy was also described as the “*soul*” of the community. It was a powerful experience not just at the time, but also later upon reflection.

“But the [RCD] taught me that there’s a soul in these communities; there are people out there .. who were there with enthusiasm .. And that happened not for one – you know it gives me goose-bumps now just thinking about it – but it happened to many, many people. And there were many of them, like on the board, I’m saying many, many people on the board experienced the same thing. .. It wasn’t about a [project], it was about a sense of community.” (1b)

Community leaders were instigators in founding RCD communities, gathering other members and facilitating support for the project. Leaders’ passion and willingness to engage the hard work associated with the activities became an important aspect of the identity, values and collective experience within the establishing RCD constituent communities. Passion and persistence was attributed to personality traits, and supported by an Australian culture of ‘having a go’. Because of their interest in community work, leaders held multiple memberships across constituent communities and were a key in alignment boundary processes. Being in RCD communities provided

pleasure and satisfaction for leaders and was experienced as a powerful collective energy and sense of community soul.

6: 3. Boundary Negotiation in Establishing an RCD Community Identity

A range of boundary processes were observed as the project emerged as a constituent cause based community. As described in the previous section, community leaders (sometimes alone and other times two or three) initiated an interest underpinned by a value set, they believed would benefit the rural community. A constituent community was then established around the agenda. As the founding members came together, they negotiated existing constituent community boundaries to create the identity and boundaries of the new RCD community, simultaneously establishing the foundation, language and reference point for the RCD activity.

Leaders were aware of needing a clear and visible identity for the new community to grow and be supported, accepted or acknowledged in the broader community:

“So it’s a matter of trying to get people on side, and I think once, once we get people – once people understand what we’re trying to do, what outcome we’re after here, and I think it’s probably going to be easier to get people on board.” (3f)

They reflected on the challenge of clearly articulating to the rural community, the purpose, values and corresponding actions.

“But there were a lot of people who didn’t understand, and I’d have to say that if we did it again, even though we’ve done it quite well, I do think that, I feel that there was some pretty simple confusions in the way that it was presented .. Community didn’t fully understand the concept ..” (2i)

The following outlines boundary processes found in the implementation of RCD projects. These related to early alignments, values, constructing the RCD community identity, and management of boundary interactions and expression.

6: 3.1 Early alignments

Early in the development of a collective identity and negotiating the new community's position and relationship amongst other constituent communities, leaders particularly in one project, actively recruited members which would bring with them alignments that would later support the project activities. This occurred where a strong RCD community identity was quickly established. It involved identifying the constituent communities in their rural community, determining which were important for the project's success, and then seeking key members.

"And we deliberately, really did the work to find that they come from different sectors. And we had a weakness in one sector, or two sectors really, so [Name 1] and [Name 2], .. were deliberately targeted and recruited within the first two or three months, because we knew that we needed someone" (2i)

From the outset in one example, the process of building alignments involved acknowledging, respecting and validating the identities and values associated with each of the constituent communities chosen for alignment. Respect was apparent in negotiating the differing agendas brought by each alignment, to then reach a common agenda for the new community without negating other community memberships.

Members were aware that non-alignments were not necessarily inevitable in establishing the RCD community. Avoiding "old scars" was achieved by focusing on the project purpose when building and maintaining alignments.

"Yeah, but it was good because it was started from scratch so you weren't picking up something that had old scars. You weren't picking up something that had enemies, if we've got enemies now that's because we've made them along the way. We've controlled the situation. Um, I don't think we have enemies." (2i)

The RCD community agenda became the rhetoric of the members of the above cause community. Each member spoke strongly of the purpose and benefits of their community. The rhetoric was

repeated by new members as well as founding members and is presented in detail in 6:3.5. This provided a clear agenda with which other communities could align or non-align.

Aligning with an RCD agenda was connected to clear goals. Participants felt the need to identify strongly with the goals of their community, personalising them as their beliefs and actions.

"I think the main thing is .. that when you believe in something you've just got to go for it."
(2c)

The sentiment expressed in the above quote was common across all participants. Participants sought to understand or describe how this belief worked within the constituent community, and referred to their community as having the same *"vision"*, *"goal"*, *"dream"*, and *"desire"*.

".. a group of people got together with a vision .. I think that they all genuinely had one desire .. To get this [project] and to get something for the community and that's what they did. .. we had this dream, goal, whatever you want to call it, and we were going to get there .." (2g)

Clarity of purpose was seen in a simple and unshifting goal, without complications and provisos:

".. we had a pretty clear focused goal and that was to get the [project] in town, and, you know, it wasn't big flowery mission statements or anything like that." (2f)

"I mean everyone just wanted the [project] up and running that's all there was to it .." (2a)

Where emerging communities had shifting goals the sense of an achievable purpose became compromised:

"But what happened was he kept on stretching the goal posts. .. that then changed the whole parameter of what was achievable and what wasn't." (3a)

Ultimately shifting goals led to no clear vision with which the fledgling RCD community could strongly identify:

"There was not yet a clear vision for what the steps in the process might be." (3g)

The lack of focal point resulted in no clear boundaries by which to define the constituent community:

“.. [forming RCD community] at the moment I think is a bit more, yeah we’re still talking about it and we’re still saying, “Well these are great things, this is a great thing to do, where do we go from here? .. you can look at it in six months and see what happens – whether it fell on its head or whether it’s going.” (3f)

Without definition, clear direction and negotiated values there was lack of certainty in the capacity to establish an RCD community. Ultimately this led to no clear RCD community for people to join and no clear basis for building alignments. Without this the project did not get past planning and ideas.

“.. So we just lost the sense of our direction ..” (3e)

While it took effort to establish and accurately present a clear community identity which expounded the goals and values central to the project, where this was done, people were able to determine whether these matched their own when considering joining the community. Clear goals and values from the outset enabled members to focus on pursuing the community purpose rather than spending time working out what the new communities’ values involved. It also provided a focus for establishing early alignments.

Early alignment boundary processes focused on the feature- and cause-based communities. They are set out in the following under the same headings as these communities were introduced in chapter five.

6: 3.1.1 RCD and feature-based community boundary processes

6: 3.1.1a Length of connection with the rural community

In the new RCD communities it was considered important to represent both new-comer and long-timer communities due to their different relationship with the rural community. The result brought together a broad range of experience and knowledge which informed RCD processes.

“You see that’s the blend we’ve got. And we got people on the, I don’t want to name names, but we’ve got some with minimal experience. But extremely good combination because, you know, they’ve got, have a very modest wage-time jobs and now, they haven’t travelled much,

they haven't got much career experience, but they bring what the rest of us don't have, which is a knowledge of the community.” (2c)

In one RCD community the initial membership was predominantly drawn from the new-comer community. Within the rural community there was a sense that new-comers “*don't know the town that well*” (2e), which was reflected in how the project was received.

“.. [Rural town] were saying like, ‘These [project] people, well look they’ve all only been here 12 months, what the bloody hell do they know?’ ..” (2a)

New-comers acknowledged that long-timers were connected across the rural community and were thus valuable members of an RCD community:

“.. one of our directors who is [Long-timer] .. I would say you’d find it very valuable, she’s been here for generations .. And because she’s a local person, she brought with her huge experience of how to get the community in volume ..” (2c)

In shaping the RCD community identity initial members thus recruited in a manner that would ensure alignments could be built with the long-timer community.

“I wasn’t actually in the first part of the [RCD community] stuff.. ‘cos we’ve been here longer, we were actually asked to join the committee to get that profile. Because as you say like, a lot of them hadn’t been here for that long. So that’s when [long-timer] and I were actually approached to go on to it.” (2a)

Alignments with both the new-comer and long-timer communities were early boundary processes for one RCD community.

6: 3.1.1b Time spent currently in the rural community

Full-timers valued the contribution part-timers brought to an RCD community while also highlighting the restrictions in their engagement.

“[Member]: Business person. Part-timer here, valuable asset to the board - very, very. .. But is only here part-time, so he only comes to half the meetings. He’s full of business knowledge and a very big asset, very good asset to have on a board.” (2d)

The part-time / full-time boundary was managed through an acceptance within the RCD community of part-timers reduced attendance to RCD activities.

6: 3.1.1c Age oriented alignment

“From day one .. we’ve really gone out of our way, I mean quite consciously tried to include all age groups, and we, right through .. we missed the younger age group. .. we knew we were missing it.” (2c)

Some RCD communities tried to align with and recruit members from all age groups. However this proved difficult and thus became an ongoing process (see 6:3.4.1c).

6: 3.1.1d SES oriented alignment

Across the interviews the capacity to find financial support from within the rural community was discussed, particularly in those projects that had an economic development component. These discussions highlighted where affluence existed in the rural community, and acknowledged the contribution to the success of the projects.

“Yeah, so we got pretty hard-nosed about it and held more meetings, and the numbers you know were swelled by the people at [Neighbouring rural town]. There was a fair amount of affluence in [Neighbouring rural town] as well.” (1b)

The above quote reflects recruiting new members by SES. In contrast, the following quote demonstrates a strength of feeling towards a SES related constituent community and an opinion regarding the new RCD communities’ level of association with this community. This alignment was at that time being negotiated and the statement was in response to other members’ interest in supporting a connection with the community in question:

“We certainly won’t be giving to the bloody middle class wankers at the jazz festival, I can tell you that. Be told.” (2d)

6: 3.1.1e Local/non-local oriented alignment

One participant, while acknowledging the distinction made by some community members, claimed the boundary between local and non-local did not exist in the implementation of projects. This

pointed to the RCD community's need for a range of skills and ideas. With this purpose in mind, the RCD community member considered the local – non-local distinction to be irrelevant, managing the boundary by focusing on all support as important for the project:

“.. A lot of them couldn't care less; couldn't care less and every body's welcome and we're all new to it. So that sort of local – nonlocal bullshit just doesn't exist.” (2d)

6: 3.1.2 RCD and cause community boundary processes

6: 3.1.2a Conservation boundary processes

“.. they took longer than us. And one of their problems was .. The lady who got it going .. if you read the paper every week you'll notice [her husband] is writing an anti-forestry letter every week in the paper. .. She's a lovely lady. And I don't know him so he's probably a nice fellow too. But that, that stigma of that [visible alignment with Green activity], stopped them, stopped the [RCD]. And when [member] moved aside and someone else took over the leadership of it, it got going.” (1c)

The rural community of the preceding quote, included forestry and agricultural constituent communities whose members held conflicting values compared to those held by the Green constituent community. As the project being described was initiated by members of the Green community this alignment meant the forestry and agricultural communities perceived the RCD community was based in values not akin to their world view. The non-alignment was addressed by removing the perceived alignment with purely green values through a change in leadership of the emerging RCD community. The core values within the RCD community which were more generic and could be aligned with forestry or agricultural values then became more apparent enabling the RCD community to build increased alignments, membership and support and accordingly make the project viable.

6: 3.1.2b Structural development oriented boundary processes

Some RCD communities built alignments with developers and their supporting communities (see 5:1.2.3b) to attain materials towards needed infrastructure or facilities such as rental space for the project. However these boundary processes were a juggling act. RCD communities needed to

simultaneously balance active non-alignment strategies with these same developer communities, to maintain support and alignments with other needed constituent communities.

“.. that was more a negative attitude in the town towards the developer that were actually doing the building. So it wasn't actually a negative thing yeah for the [project], it was actually .. [Developer].” (2a)

Early in presenting their RCD community within the rural community, members strongly promoted both their identity as independent of developer communities, as well as the values and purpose of their collective identity (see 5: 2.3.4).

In summary, the constituent communities in all these boundary processes were evident in both the recruitment for alignments and the active non-alignment in an effort to encourage and not discourage new membership. Managing alignments early in the establishment of RCD communities was important to progress RCD activities.

6: 3.2 Values and agendas

The values and associated agendas outlined in this section were found across the RCD constituent communities in the study. This suggests they were less significant in differentiating communities as they were not associated with determining differences and boundaries between RCD communities, yet were they were important in the identity and meaning found within these cause communities. Accordingly they arose as agendas described in community activities. In the process of negotiating or establishing a cause community, members had the opportunity to present their agenda by voicing what they believed in; - the values they wanted included as part of the communities' identities.

“.. without the trust you can bring together a whole pile of people who have hidden agendas. And I think that this is where we got lost last time round, was I think that the person who was at the core of it actually, had all sorts of hidden agendas. I don't personally understand what they were or how they worked, but they weren't in sync with the rest of the community.” (3a)

Here, in the development of an RCD community, the member had identified trust as key in enabling open negotiation of agendas to facilitate establishing the collective agenda. Without this, their

experience was that the collective purpose was not established and the RCD community disintegrated. The following values and agendas found in the data were important to boundary processes, being strong components of the constituent community identity.

6: 3.2.1 “Have a go”

Being willing to “have a go” was seen to be a keystone of RCD communities. This value included that to be active in community did not require being elite, but having a positive approach and a willingness to try new things.

“You don’t have to be special at all to make a hell of a difference; all you’ve got to do is be prepared to have a go. .. You don’t have to be anyone special or you don’t have to be a world beater at anything, all you’ve got to do to achieve this is, want to do it. It’s really about a want to do it attitude. And that’s what got us going.” (2h)

It was also associated with a “make it happen” (2h,2f,2c,2g) attitude. This was described as having the confidence to push and negotiate externally set boundaries, especially those relating to funders, media and local council/government. Breaking the rules was apparent when the outcomes were considered beneficial to the broader community, but not for individual benefit.

“We’d ring [funder] up and they’d say, ‘oh it takes you six weeks or eight weeks to do that’. And we’d say, ‘no, we’ll do it in a fortnight.” (2h)

“We’ve broken every rule so far ..” (2d)

Throughout the interviews there were examples of rules being deliberately ignored. It particularly applied to top-down processes and rules which were treated as guidelines rather than requirements. Breaking rules was also related to valuing local input and control (see 5:2.3.2). At times it was applied to legislative rules, bending how these were met for the constituent community gain. For example, building progressed prior to council approval so a project could launch within the preferred timeframe of the RCD cause community.

6: 3.2.2 Team approach

The importance of working as a team was highly valued and found expression in a variety of ways.

Each RCD community did not want an individual accepting or claiming glory for activities that were a collective effort and achievement.

“By the same token at the end of the day if we’re successful and got it up and running – I’m going to say something here that may offend, but I don’t care, I’ll say it anyway – I don’t want one particular [member] to stand out and say, “Look what [I’ve] done.” (3b)

There was significant emphasis on inclusivity and respecting each person’s contribution. They endeavoured to ensure continued recognition of each member’s involvement:

“Yeah there was no ‘boo-hoo’, ‘pull your head in’, ‘forget about it you’re wrong’, or anything like that. If someone had a thought it was tabled, discussed and if something deserved to be done from it, it was done.” (2h)

Democratic decision making was highly valued and was believed to have contributed to continued engagement around the RCD processes.

“There was a lot of good laughter, there was always interaction. Every person had an opportunity to express their opinion, so I think that the attendances remained extra-ordinarily high, we would have averaged over the months .. in excess of an 80 percent attendance.” (2i)

The preceding quote also highlights the importance of interaction as a community. The “warm and fuzzies” were valued as an integral part of RCD communities and in ultimately achieving project goals.

“He can’t, you know, he can’t commit to meetings, ‘I can’t make the meeting, I can’t do this, I can’t’. Well that’s part of community. Yes you’re a valuable businessman, it’s nice to have you, but if you’re going to be [an RCD member], then you’ve also got to put up with the warm and fuzzies. ‘Cos that’s what it’s about. That’s part of what it’s about.” (1a)

It was recognised that without mixing as an RCD community, project objectives were either not likely to be achieved, or would be achieved more slowly. Forming the new cause communities also involved creating something to “be part of”:

“What’s the community get out of it? .. but being part of it I think is what people want. Having to be part of it.” (1c)

6: 3.2.3 Maintaining a business-like approach

The importance of ‘warm fuzzies’ did not detract from focusing on the task. The value of being ‘business like’ in RCD communities’ activities was frequently described. Community structure and task setting occurred in direct response to this agenda, particularly where their activities included an economic development component.

“.. sounds nice and fuzzy and warm, but at the same time it’s a business and you’ve got to make business decisions.” (1a)

All the RCD communities valued developing a tasked approach in stepping towards an ultimate goal and keeping up a pace of activity to ensure success.

“Yeah, we had a pretty clear focused goal .. Yeah and we always had an agenda and focused on pushing it through.” (2f)

They identified the tasks required to achieve project objectives and then determined who within their community was best able to complete them.

“.. what’s the best model? How do we do it? And effectively we applied a trialled model and we’ve just put the personalities into that model and gave them tasks.” (2i)

Within one RCD community, maintaining momentum became an agenda in itself. They wanted to excel in their activities beyond what had been achieved for like projects in other rural communities.

“That became a bit of a challenge for us too, you know, in the early stages they said “oh you’ve set records here”, and we thought, ‘bugger it ,we’re going to keep setting records’. We’re probably a fairly competitive bunch, the leadership group, and so we probably rose to that challenge.” (2f)

6: 3.2.4 Keeping broad community engagement for sustainability

Some RCD communities considered broad community engagement to be an important value upon which activity should be founded:

“.. and I think that the values are very, if you can get that sort of ingredient into a community project, it’s very important.” (2c)

This agenda was important to develop and maintain an RCD community through which to achieve the cause.

“So this is why: keeping community engaged, and you can keep it moving. But don’t let it disengage” (1c)

There was an awareness of needing projects to be embedded as part of the broader community identity so sustainability would not rely on individuals.

“.. and try and get it imbedded in the culture as quickly as possible so that it doesn’t, the individuals don’t matter so much.” (3c)

This engagement agenda was acted out by members in a number of ways, including building interest through marketing or ownership strategies. Marketing involved contact across the rural community:

“I mean there was a lot of begging and knocking on doors and mailings and what have you, .. certainly I didn’t notice any drop off, we just had to keep people motivated.” (2j)

Ownership strategies included offering greater autonomy by allowing people to test their ideas and have control over decisions and processes.

“.. They don’t say “well I don’t think that will work”, they let us work it out.” (1c)

Another example was creating official ‘positions’ within the RCD community.

“.. and two of those ladies now they’re not on the board but they are there as ambassadors so they come along to board meetings, and we get their input.” (2j)

Such strategies demonstrated creativity and flexibility to enact the agenda in a manner that responded to the interests shown by community members.

6: 3.2.5 Mutual benefit

The RCD communities emphasised the value of mutual benefit in their activities. It was an agenda for ensuring a project’s success. If activities were progressed in a manner that also benefitted participating constituent communities and individuals, this contributed to sustaining the RCD communities’ further activities:

".. got to support things that are actually going to come back and support the [RCD community] as well." (2a)

It was also recognised as a basis for a marketing strategy to engage the broader community.

".. you've got to be out there flying the flag and reminding people that yeah, support us and we'll support you back." (2b)

6: 3.2.6 Support the 'common people'

Looking after the 'common people' was valued in each of the RCD communities. This agenda was discernible through decisions often made on the basis of ensuring activities were accessible to rural community members. It particularly applied to those with an average or low income and no formal high status within the communities, yet who were engaged in community activities.

"Whereas you get little community groups who have given up all of their time for nothing to do things like scouts and that. We gave some to [them] .." (1c)

This agenda was underpinned by the importance of social interaction in rural communities for supporting people's well-being.

"And I've got to tell you .. You know there's blokes, I know a couple of old fellows that are pretty crook and the only time they go out, nine times a year – maybe ten; they go to Anzac Day and they'll go to nine home games of football. .. but right down to the little guys that come and play at the footy you know and muck around with their friends." (1b)

6: 3.2.7 Youth and leadership development

In each of the RCD communities, the need to support youth arose as an important focus.

".. they are running a youth council. That's about leadership development and all those sorts of things. So we'd like to be involved in that, again .. training of youth and engagement of youth and keeping them off the street, yeah. And you know, it's good for us, it's good for the community and it's good for the youth that are involved." (1a)

In this example, the agenda behind a primarily economic oriented RCD included social orientations such as expanding the opportunities available to young people.

In summary, values that were common across RCD communities related to how members engaged with each other and saw the purpose of the communities' existence. A culture of having a go to "*make it happen*" were important, with members being willing to bend external rules and guidelines if they saw it brought broader community benefit. This occurred within RCD communities where team work was valued and underpinned by a focus on collective recognition, and respecting and valuing democratic processes so all members could participate. Clear tasking was important, as was engaging with each other as a community rather than individually completing project tasks. RCD communities that held throughout to values of having a go and teamwork, moved quickly to their ultimate goal.

These were some examples of agendas that were common in RCD communities' activities. They spoke to the values that informed decision-making and actions within RCD communities and in the rousing of community activity, became agendas. These values and agendas were common across RCD communities and also did not appear to be contentious for other constituent communities, thus while they were important motivations within RCD communities, they were not the facets which defined one RCD community's identity as separate to another RCD community.

6: 3.3 Boundary construction

New RCD communities spent time establishing a clear sense of their identity as separate from aligned communities, particularly the rural community and the funding source. The focus was on being an identifiable entity able to offer benefit to the rural community. They also made it clear to the rural community that while they were aligned with their sources of funding, they were separate identities with different values and agendas.

6: 3.3.1 RCD community and rural community boundary

RCD community members developed a clear sense of their relationship to the broader community. They talked about motivating "*the community*" and gaining "*community support*", referring to "*we*"

as the RCD community going out to the broader or rural community. This was done by promoting their existence as a constituent community.

“.. right from day one we were in the face of the community.” (2i)

While moving amongst the rural community, RCD community members actively identified themselves as RCD members, through dress, conversation and other marketing strategies.

Concurrently, they were quick to highlight their role.

“So we’re, we’re out there showing that we are supporting the community, helping them to achieve their goals, you know. The way I see it is you have to be out doing it. You have to be seen. You’ve got to show that you are supporting people and community events.” (2b)

6: 3.3.2 RCD community and funder boundary

The RCD community also actively sought to be identified as a separate entity to the funder. This was felt passionately even at the risk of conflict with the funding community.

Funder’s had strong rules around project identities, directing local input regarding project names and presentation. In two of the three communities, names had to be approved by the funder and these were not as the community preferred. RCD community members felt strongly about having an identity of their own, separating themselves from funder’s values and agendas. The conviction emphasised in the below quote highlights the importance of these boundary processes.

“I had to work fairly hard in PR terms to make the [RCD community] separate .. [Funder] always want to make it: [Funder! Funder! Funder! Funder! Funder!]. I mean I can’t say [Funder] anything as often as they want us. They want to put spin on all my press releases and stuff and I just say get off with you. I don’t want to talk about [Funder], I want to talk about [RCD community].” (2d)

The boundary was highlighted when the funding source was seen to be hindering or slowing decision making processes, taking control away from the RCD community.

“The most trouble is actually [Funder] themselves. .. Well they’ve given us more grief than anything else. .. and it’s been a three week muck around just to try and get some Ok’s out of [Funder] itself .. Everything’s got to be ran through them.” (2a)

In juggling different agendas, funding was sometimes spent on activities akin to, but broader than the funder's agenda. Such management of boundary processes created understandable tensions in the accountability processes between the funding source and the RCD community.

"So we got a grant for that, spent the money on the [activity] then when they were acquitting the grant they said, 'This money isn't for that', (laugh). We said to them, 'Well, it's bad luck, we spent the money'. .. We got it for a business plan actually for [the project], so .. even though we [used it for other components of the project] and so forth, we also did the business plan as well. So we covered ourselves. They accepted it in the finish. They didn't want to accept it at first." (1c)

While these tensions were resolved, such boundary management had risks that were emphasised both in contractual documents, and in the ongoing interaction between funding sources and RCD communities. The role of power in boundary processes is further demonstrated in the below quote. Where interactions were around other differences of opinion, it was impressed that the power lay with the funder regarding the communities' ongoing access to the funding.

".. we had a senior [Funder] person in a couple of weeks ago and he was saying 'well look, I could stop that payment, and I wouldn't, but if you're not spending it where I think you should be, I could just say 'no payment'. Sort of half-jokingly, but at the same time!" (1a)

The tensions in these interactions indicated the depth of feeling associated with having control. The motivation behind some RCD community activities was the opportunity to have their own say.

".. and it'd be a good chance to shove it up those blokes up the road and get our own" (1b)

Establishing a sense of equality was for one RCD community, part of the initial construction of boundaries with the funders. This was a conscious approach of showing control and ownership.

"There's a strong feeling [in the RCD community] that we didn't want the [Funder] people to think we were going to jump every time they said jump. .. We needed their help .. hopefully we weren't arrogant about it. But, we, there were one or two people in the [funder] earlier on, who came across on the basis that these were your instructions for the month, and we very quickly tried to diplomatically tell them they could make their suggestions, but we were going to do it our way." (2c)

Within this RCD community, pursuing equality entailed addressing differences throughout the funding period. For example, they initiated the negotiation of procedures that better met the communities' interests and needs.

".. and it was quite amusing really because he'd come in time and again with guidelines for us and we'd go back and say, 'Look this isn't the way to do it [Funder], it's better to do it this way' (laughter)" (2c)

It involved directly challenging directions given by the funding source.

"We were probably pretty proactive. If there was something we didn't agree with or didn't like, if it come from emails or phone, we just ring up and say, 'Hey this is a load of bullshit', you know, 'This is bureaucratic codswallop' .." (2f)

For example, where there was sufficient confidence, the local agenda would be pushed through when funder's timelines did not respond to the local agenda.

"[Funder said] '.. you can't get a public meeting organised in the ten days'. And we said, 'well if you're available, we'll have the meeting. Turn up, we'll do it.'" (2h)

Thus, although the boundary and responsibilities between the RCD community and the funder were defined up front, there remained a belief that these were negotiable:

"[Funder] have got some fairly set rules on what you're allowed to and what you're not allowed to [do]. .. [Funder] have got very strict policies on a lot of those sorts of things. And we can change; their policies are not set in concrete, right. If we come up with a reason to change something .. suggestion and discussions and all that sort of stuff." (2h)

While these RCD community members claimed power by negotiating boundary processes throughout the project, this instance was in contrast to the quote on page 135 where RCD community members did not push their own agendas directly. By applying them creatively but surreptitiously, the potential conflict in these boundary processes was delayed not avoided.

The funders' agendas were initially presented within the contracts and policy documents given at the beginning of funding. They were re-iterated and the power balance clarified in further guidelines and meetings. However, the RCD communities' agenda's while clear to members, were

not always so clearly described to funders. The need to balance the differing agendas in these boundary processes thus fell to the RCD communities.

Despite the juggle, RCD communities welcomed the endeavours of funding sources to build alignments across like RCD communities from different rural communities. It created a sense of belonging to a larger RCD community, but did not detract from the identity of the individual RCD constituent communities.

“But you know we were welcomed into it as, we were as welcome as any other members of the [funder] staff. And I felt that was really good. They talked about that and how they’ve got a strong community group within the [funder] structure itself, and that was good to know that you’re part of it.” (2h)

At these times the funding source was recognised as a supportive alignment for the RCD constituent community.

“But the training courses with [funder] .. were incredibly informative, and the support from [funder] has just been phenomenal. You know you ring up people and you talk to anybody and everybody.” (2h)

The establishment of the RCD community identity included very active management of boundary processes to develop a clear distinction between them, the rural community, and the funders. The distinction with the rural community was achieved by members being highly visible and focusing on noncontroversial values, as they promoted the role, purpose and benefit of their project. The boundary process with the funding community was a balancing act of strong alignments for the benefits of support and infrastructure, while attaining differentiation and a sense of equality between the two communities, to facilitate local control of activities.

6: 3.4 Ongoing boundaries processes within RCD constituent communities

Boundary processes were a continuous characteristic of constituent communities. Once the initial negotiations had occurred in the establishment of the RCD community and activities were

underway, many ongoing boundary processes affected relationships between members within the community and the manner in which activities were undertaken. Ongoing boundary processes were evident with feature, interest and cause based communities. In addition to the alignment and multiple membership examples described in 5:2.3c other continued boundary processes are described below.

6: 3.4.1 With feature-based constituent communities

6: 3.4.1a Length of connection with the rural community

Boundary processes relating to members' length of connection with the rural community affected relationships within the RCD community in the same manner as within the rural community. The difference in life experience and approach between long-timers and new-comers also brought different perspectives to the RCD communities' processes. Many new-comers had, or were still engaged in professional careers, and had had access to processes and facilities readily available in cities which informed their expectations:

".. by and large they're very professional people and they'll give you a whole new perspective on the community of what they want out of the [project]." (1b)

Democracy and broad community representation were strongly held values within the new-comer community but were not always present in other constituent community processes. Members of these constituent communities struggled to assimilate values to work together within the RCD community:

"Most of them are, you know, born and bred [Rural town]ites. There's a few people that come in from the mainland, they tend to struggle to fit into that group. It's a conservative group, it's almost a dictatorship about how they get things done. And a lot of the new-comers want, you know, a process for, you know, 'let's vote on this'. That's not how it happens: two or three people say we're going to do this, and they get it done. So there's still a bit of friction there."
(1a)

New-comer members within RCD communities anticipated processes that ameliorated personal risk. These included formal accountability and documentation of activities but such processes were not always present. New-comers sought to include them within RCD community functioning. If unsuccessful many new-comers disengaged from the RCD community.

“There was never any documentation, there was no expectation of people giving reports, any correspondence received or the Treasurer, the Treasurer was non-functional, would never accept the responsibilities of being treasurer. .. We were losing directors; new directors were not comfortable with the way it was going. Again its interstate people with a lot of experience that were saying, you know, I’m not prepared to put myself at risk. .. I’m personally liable .. So we changed.” (1a)

Within the RCD community, long-timers felt a need to educate new-comers about the rural community. The knowledge shared, focused on historical information which was part of the identity of being a long-timer.

“People don’t realise it. This was all swamp. [Long-timer 1] and I, we actually had a bit of a, well we had a bit of an email session earlier between the board. Different things around the town which the others just didn’t know about. Like where the community centre is it’s actually sinking. .. and that was originally lake. But that’s why the community centre is sinking. It’s swamp. Everything’s swamp. I mean, they don’t, even know that. A lot of people wouldn’t realise [Rural town] was all swamp.” (2a)

The information was not related directly to the immediate activities of the RCD community and was therefore unlikely to change any decisions or processes within the RCD community. Instead, it was an act that symbolised the foundational difference between the long timer and new-comer communities and thus served to identify a boundary. The boundary process was at the same time a gesture of goodwill to enable a shared knowledge and the opportunity to acknowledge and respect the different identities and alignments within the RCD community.

These boundary processes continued to be felt throughout the RCD community’s life:

“.. that different people can work on committees. Like every committee probably that I’ve worked on all my life in [Rural community], naturally it’s been people I’ve grown up with. .. [in contrast] we had to go around the table and introduce ourselves and when I got up and said I was born [Rural town], I think they thought I was a bloody dinosaur. (Laughter)” (2e)

6: 3.4.1b Employment and SES boundary processes

Managing the membership of retired and working people in RCD communities was an example of an ongoing boundary process which impacted how activities were undertaken.

“.. the blend of retired and working people has been very important, because we, the retired people have the time, which people like [Member 1], and [Member 2], and others don’t have.” (2c)

It was considered important to have a mix from both so activities could be followed through quickly. It was suggested that this contributed to the success of the project.

Boundary processes relating to SES were continually negotiated within the RCD communities.

“He turns up in his trackies and all that sort of stuff. I get into trouble because I turn up to meetings in my overalls. And they have a sling off, but that’s the way it is.” (2a)

Within the above example, while the boundary was highlighted and acknowledged through humorous interchange regarding apparel, there was also general acceptance of handling the boundary in this manner. In addition to affecting relationships within the RCD community, an acceptance of such differences was required to maintain the alignments created.

6: 3.4.1c Boundary processes relating to age

RCD community members were very aware of the lack of the younger members and considered it important to redress. As succession is frequently an issue for the continued existence of RCD communities, engaging young people was considered important. Older people tried to understand what prevented young people’s involvement as well as strategies for increased engagement. One barrier was understood to be the time young people had available, as they were working and raising families:

“One of the things that worried me, they are all sort of my age or even older and we, there are no young people turning up. And I think that in [Rural town] there are a lot of single mums there, you know, they’ve got, they’re busy, and what have you. But I think that in any community it’s got to somehow go out to the young ones.” (2j)

Various strategies used to engage the younger community included exploring mentoring processes:

“I think that what, we’ve got to look at it and we are looking at it, is getting various sub committees, on the, involved in the [RCD community] with board members, and then get somebody, whether it is a school leaver to come in and on that sub-committee and give us a bit of input and sort of try and involve the young people.” (2j)

However, involvement appeared to relate to the motivational needs of identity and meaning (see 6:2). The younger constituent community were not seen as looking for something to which they could belong.

“The oldies, they had a cause and they liked the idea of having a cause. Now I’m generalising terribly but, better than the youngies did.” (2d)

6: 3.4.2 With interest based constituent communities

Alignments with interest-based communities also continued to be negotiated. Multiple memberships impacted on these boundary processes with the conflicts of interest due to members’ strong alignments with other communities bringing potential bias in decision making. It was anticipated this would create *“interesting”* dynamics when deciding on formal alignments, between collectives.

“So, I don’t know, that will get all tricky too, ‘cos with the board you’ve got some tied up with the yacht club, some tied up in all different sections of the community itself, like [RCD member a] and [RCD member b] on the ambulance, so some of that will get interesting.” (2a)

This quote identifies the expectation that multiple memberships would mean needing to manage the resultant alignments and associated agendas within the internal business of the RCD cause community.

6: 3.4.3 With other cause communities

In addition to the impact on early alignments, the antagonistic boundary between developers and the receiving community had a long term impact on RCD. It continued to affect support from the rural community. Where RCD communities were seen as associated with developers who had previously threatened community values, there was vocal resistance to the project.

".. some small groups that were anti the [project]. And it was all based on the belief of what happened here twenty and thirty years ago with development and that sort of stuff." (2h)

The reasons to not support a project were not always directly related to the values, objectives, and benefits. A connection which was seen as supportive of developers was sufficient for non-alignment to occur:

".. they weren't against the [project] at all, they were against [Developer] owning our building. And that's what it was about." (2a)

Any association with developers was interpreted within the rural community as aligning with the values of the developers rather than just a use of available resources, as some participants proposed.

In summary, within RCD communities, the negotiation of boundaries with other constituent communities was a continuous task. They impacted relationships as well as the maintenance of alignments for the RCD community. The proactive management of these processes was seen as contributing to the success of projects.

6: 3.5 Symbolic expressions in new RCD constituent communities

Various language, actions and physical items were used to express the identity and boundaries of the RCD communities. These were observed in rhetoric associated with community activity, the unchallenged routines in community functioning and the use of documents to represent boundaries.

As identified in section 6:3.1, the process of establishing a new constituent community involved articulating the new community to other constituent communities and to the rural community of which they were a part. One example of this articulation involved the development of a common

language which symbolised the meaning and values held by the community. One community developed a description about the rural community's past needs and the associated benefits of their project. The language emphasised in the quote below was used by all interviewed, even very new members, indicating its role in galvanising the community identity.

"In the past a lot of people used to go into [Regional town]... probably a lot of the local businesses suffered as a result .. So I see the [RCD] as a means of perhaps keeping the people in the town .. we're providing a great service and we are ultimately going to provide some benefits to the community. So the township can grow." (2b) (researcher emphasis)

There was further rhetoric about social benefits of creating a more connected and supported rural community. This was evident in comments such as:

"So I seem to think that it will pull the community close together .." (2b)

"I think it will help to knit the community together." (2c)

"I'd imagine it would, create more closeness into some of the community groups .." (2h)

".. we are supporting the community, helping them to achieve their goals" (2j)

Through the above rhetoric, language was used to ensure the RCD community became synonymous with community benefit.

Examples of symbolic actions within the RCD communities were found in the observation of their structure and roles.

"I suppose one of the other things that's been really good with the committee is the fact that anyone has been prepared to take over anyone else's job at the drop of a hat. .. 'Oh [Member 2]'s not going to be here, can you do the minutes?' So you just get up and move around the table and you do it. If [Member 3]'s away [Member 4] just stands in as the chairman .. and he sits down in the director's chair and away he goes." (2h)

In meetings each role was associated with a particular seat at a table. If another member needed to perform a role on behalf of an absent member, they physically moved to the designated seat, rather than undertake the role from their usual position. This symbolic process had become routine:

“And it’s just, it’s done. It’s not anything you consciously do or you go out of your way to do it or avoid it, it’s just that that’s the way we’ve always done it.” (2h)

Such symbolic routines were established quickly, drawn from members’ previous experiences in community and became, with little consideration, integral in a new constituent community. At the time of interview this RCD community had only existed for twelve months.

Whilst most RCD communities held monthly meetings, one met weekly. This action symbolised to members the importance of their project emphasising urgency in their responsibilities. It was also a practical opportunity to interact to facilitate the project’s continuance, as outside of formal gatherings members were unlikely to socialise.

“.. we don’t go out and party together or anything like that, but certainly if we’re in the same area we make a point of saying good-day to each other and that sort of thing.” (2h)

Contracts, MOU’s and benchmarks were found within most of the RCD communities. As well as identifying responsibilities, these played an important role in boundary processes. Such documents and figures symbolised a boundary between the RCD and the respective communities.

“So it was a case bringing it right back down to basics, and saying, ‘This is who we are, this is the service we wish to provide, this is how we can help you, this is how you can help us. Let’s have a clear and level playing field and then we can carry on.’” (3a)

Members developed such documentation identifying the RCD in relation to other constituent communities. Presenting, *“This is who we are”*, outlined where the boundaries lay.

These are just a few examples of how symbolic expressions of RCD communities occurred in the actions and language of the communities’ processes. They created structure in community functioning, and documented the agreed identity of the communities in relation to other constituent communities.

Section 6:3 highlights that building a constituent community around a project's concept and tasks required the establishment of a community identity around which the negotiation of boundaries could occur. Where these were addressed early a strong RCD community developed with clear agendas, values and tasks and supported by broad community alignment. Conversely, where identity establishment was not actively addressed, RCD communities struggled to form and project goals took longer to achieve or the project folded. Maintaining a focus on uncontentious values facilitated the processes of establishing the RCD community from amongst the existing constituent communities. Important early alignment processes were particularly apparent with some feature and cause communities.

Common values were evident across each of the different RCD communities, highlighting their importance in cause community identities. They also highlight that some of the important aspects which define a community, are not always found through differentiating one community from another. However, it was important that clear boundaries were constructed between the RCD communities, the funder and rural communities, to encourage membership and support.

Ongoing boundary processes with feature, interest and cause communities affected the relationships and functioning within the RCD communities. Some RCD community boundary processes were expressed symbolically emphasising the RCD communities' existence as a separate constituent cause community.

6: 4. Community Ownership

*"Like we look as [Rural town name] and say "that's **our** [project]." (2a participant emphasis)*

Ownership was a component of RCD communities that was either alluded to by participants or directly described. Ownership was referred to as both an outcome of community activity, and as a process enabling community activity. In both contexts two working components could be observed:

ownership in the concept, project purpose and values; and ownership of the tasks associated both with the project implementation and the RCD community maintenance and continuation.

RCD community members who embraced ownership of the RCD concept developed a strong sense of connection with the project and thus a desire for control over project activities and decision making.

*“We really wanted them to understand it was our [RCD], we own it, and at the end of the day we were going to call the shots. .. I mean it’s **our** [RCD] for sure.” (2c participant emphasis)*

Such ownership was seen to be strengthened where there was an identified need by members of the rural community, for the outcomes and processes of the RCD.

“I think people they start looking at the idea. It’s not just, ‘[RCD member] wants to do this’, it’s more ‘that’s what the community needs’.” (2c)

Ownership of the concept involved embracing the project agenda and values previously described in the establishment of a community identity. Taking on this identity was associated with the extent to which the RCD community identity defined and confirmed members’ individual sense of identity and belonging.

Ownership of the tasks involved in the project, was founded in the sense of connection with the concept, such that the passion led to taking responsibility for making it happen. Members saw they needed to act for the project to succeed:

“the community itself have to respond to the challenges. The government can’t help ... it won’t come down and do it for you. It needs someone to hand the cheque to.” (1c)

In one RCD community task ownership was strongly embraced with a willingness to engage proactively to achieve the goals.

“.. we were going to get there and so if it meant meeting every day we probably would have.” (2g)

This was in direct contrast to another RCD process where some members were involved out of a sense of obligation and thus lacked ownership and enthusiasm for the tasks:

".. there was some enthusiasm for community, but there was also some, sort of obliged to be there." (1a)

Participants explained that where people felt obligated, tasks were not completed or not completed with due diligence, compared to other members whose enthusiasm and ownership led to being keen to do the work needed to strengthen and maintain the RCD community and achieve project goals.

In another RCD community, ownership of tasks and a corresponding sense of responsibility took time to build.

"And it just felt like it took forever to get to that point where, yes, you know, they were willing to take on some responsibility and that they actually understood that "hey, if we don't actually play a part in this, it's not going to happen." (3h)

The lack of ownership was attributed to predetermined outsider agendas.

".. And it was too prescriptive, and like the responsibility had been taken away from the local community." (3e)

At the time, an RCD constituent community was not established around the project. It later seemed possible when there was local action on required tasks.

"I think it was because – in looking back now, now that we've restarted it again - it was because we took the responsibility and the power away from the local people. .. and I've come back – and it's a whole different scenario and it's being driven from the grass roots. And the responsibility is staying there. .. so they've started to take some ownership of the work." (3e)

In the preceding quote, local action on tasks prescribed by 'outsiders' was interpreted by the outsiders as locals taking **"some ownership of the work"**. However as emphasised in bold, participants sensed that while this was *"grass roots"* engagement, such a response was not ownership of the entire project. While there were locals and non-locals involved in planning and progressing the project, the drive and thus ownership remained with outsiders. Participants were clear that having *"locals"* embrace both concept and tasks contributed to the momentum of establishing RCD communities, as well as the project activities:

“And making, and keeping it in the community and the community ownership of it, because ... it has to continue and been given its own legs. So if [RCD leader] leaves or they change it with [Community member], or if I leave and another worker comes in, it still has legs.” (3b)

The above quotes identify that ownership included taking responsibility for tasks, and that the power to define, action and control the project needed to be based within the rural community.

With these conditions, the new RCD constituent communities could exist, flourish, and forward the project.

Community ownership as both a process and outcome involved the development of an RCD community with significant membership from within the rural community, which embraced a shared concept and the values inherent within or associated with that concept. Such engagement also entailed the local membership taking responsibility of ensuring the constituent community purpose is actively pursued.

6: 4.1 Community ownership processes

The process of community ownership within the participating projects was evident after, and in response to, the initial negotiating of values, meaning and boundaries which provided the foundation for the new RCD communities' identity.

Founding RCD community members acknowledged that the processes of engaging community ownership were linked to people's need for meaning in life. RCD communities provided the opportunity for expression and continued shaping of members' individual identity (in relation to engagement with a collective identity). As part of the RCD community, individuals had the opportunity to meet a need to belong and engage a purpose in their lives.

*“I’ve come across a number of friends and acquaintances who, will go out and buy 50 or 100 acres somewhere out in the sticks and they **don’t** have a community, you know it’s a long drive into the community and they don’t like it, and it doesn’t take long before they’re unwinding and wanting to get back into things. But they don’t want to go back to the big smoke. But*

*they do **then** recognise that what they really **crave** for, was motivating them in the first place, was to get into a small community.” (2c)*

Participants saw that filling this personal void was an important aspect of membership in an RCD community. This personal benefit was a significant consideration alongside the project goals.

“They wanted to be part of something. .. Having to be part of it.” (1c)

In some projects, community ownership was difficult to achieve.

“But that’s when – it’s a frustrating time. You know the outcome, you could see the outcome; but trying to convince the people to see it, that’s the hard part.” (3d)

This was particularly true where there had been years of depressed economic conditions with reduced health, business and education services, youth moving away for study and employment, and where previous development attempts had been associated with high conflict between constituent communities with different values.

“I think it’s getting through that negativity of, like we’d gone through 20 years or 15 years of nothing happening in [Rural town]. And like, the first thing people say is that, ‘oh this will never happen’.” (1c)

Leaders responded in various ways. In some projects developing ownership was actively managed.

“I’m looking at from community development approach. What we are trying to do now we get people on board with us, and after that – I’m not going to stay here forever .. usually people they come here work for one year, they leave, everything go back to the first step.” (3d)

While the recruitment of local and long term constituent community members was considered an important process in all participating projects, this was clearly articulated where short-term or temporary residents initiated RCD activity. As described in the above quote, without the recruitment of broader community members, and the establishment of an RCD community with a corresponding ownership, the RCD activities did not continue when the temporary residents left.

Some projects utilised the need to belong within the marketing strategy of their project to encourage community ownership and build the membership of the RCD community. They endeavoured to promote the project as something the community would want to be a part of.

"I gather in the mission statement .. the marketing thrust is to make members of the community feel left out." (2c)

Others promoted the benefits of their projects, and seeded ideas with influential rural community members.

Community ownership of project tasks, involved commitment of time and resources by individual members. This was acknowledged in the proactive recruitment of members likely to take responsibility for tasks.

"Between us we just planned certain strategies and set ourselves objectives and took off from there. .. picked the people that they thought could get things done." (2j)

Ownership of tasks was sustained by satisfaction and enjoyment in the processes, further reinforcing the contribution and commitment of members' time and work.

".. and so we'll get a lot of satisfaction out of it because we're putting something in there." (2b)

While described as highly satisfying, it was in balance with a recognised cost to individuals due to the workload demands.

"I'm getting pretty run down now. The last thing I want to be is a committee rep at the moment. But I've enjoyed every bit of it." (1b)

Despite the "**hard** going" (1c participant emphasis) and fatigue, in addition to fulfilling a need to belong and experiencing purpose and enjoyment, commitment was connected to the knowledge of the significance of each member's contribution in the process.

".. and they didn't lose interest because they knew that their opinion counted." (2i)

The commitment involved in community ownership was not only to the tasks of the project, but also the emotional and relational aspect of the RCD community. As described in the establishment of the

RCD community values in 6:3.2, engaging in warm and fuzzy community processes could not be ignored. The process of interaction and working together as a community as well as the achievement of project goals were important and further motivated giving time to the tasks.

"It was a pleasure to meet them all and work with them and, you know, and to be a part of, you know, what we've achieved." (2g)

Yet, the level of commitment required resulted in a core few being the mainstay of the RCD community. This core was seen where there were a core number of participants, yet the community membership was much larger.

"We've been only getting eight or nine lately, but we've been up to twenty." (1c)

It was particularly apparent during times where the momentum slowed in response to time consuming tasks.

"When things were going well, a lot of enthusiasm, and when things got tough we would lose people or they'd become, you know, less enthusiastic." (1a)

At these times, the momentum for the project, and the maintenance and continuance of the RCD community relied on the labours of its core members.

A process was described of balancing community ownership and leadership control. RCD community leaders juggled exerting control to maintain the momentum towards project goals, and releasing control and power so community members can take full ownership, and in turn be encouraged by contributing to shaping the RCD community, determining the process and direction.

".. you're there for the long haul. When do you have to let people have ownership? When do you have to have a bit of control coming in there to push it a little bit more to help it along?" (3b)

Community ownership was founded on individuals' need for purpose and meaning. The boundary processes, values and meanings associated with the identity of the RCD community needed to be engaged with individually by members in the establishment of the new community. As these were

embraced and the community identity emerged, ownership occurred around the concept and responsibility of the project tasks. Community ownership was difficult to engage where there was a history of a depressed rural community and previous failure. In each RCD community, a significant component of the workload was held by a core few who in turn had to manage the extent to which they held control or encouraged other members to determine community direction, activities and processes. Ownership entailed commitment by individuals of time and energy, and this was willingly given where satisfaction could be found in engaging with others and achieving together; purpose and meaning was gained from this process.

6: 5. Community Support

Buttressing community ownership was a membership base of community support which while contributing to the RCD community, played a different role to community ownership. Community support facilitated an environment where the project could progress but did not entail continued responsibility within the project.

Community support was predominantly about negotiating boundaries and establishing alignments and/or membership to strengthen the constituent community's presence and role in the rural community.

*"Now it doesn't matter whether [Leader]'s the mayor or whether he's not, he's going to have a following. So he's a good one to have on **your** side. And that doesn't necessarily mean that you have to agree totally on everything .. So that, but you haven't got the people really against you. I mean you wouldn't go and do something that was contrary to council policy or something like that type of thing, you know, because they've got a big noise. You **don't** do anything that's really going to upset the senior cits. (Laughs) And , you know, and then it's just different groups." (3c)*

The purpose of community support was not to gain members who would take ownership and responsibility within the RCD community, but to provide an environment where there was reduced resistance relating to project activities.

The initial foundations of the meaning and values needed to be established to be able to begin to gather community support for the RCD community. As with community ownership, by presenting the values and meanings there was then a foundation upon which to negotiate boundaries and develop community support, described here as the “*opportunity to reunite*”.

“I think what the [RCD] board was doing has given the opportunity to know all and the opportunity to reunite upwards.” (2i)

Belief in the RCD community values and purpose engaged support such that people were willing to move beyond their normal boundaries to assist.

“.. there are people out there that I would have never thought I’d see inside a bowling club or an RSL club or at a public meeting, who were there with enthusiasm” (1b)

Community support differs from community ownership in that support is much broader and without continued responsibility. Ownership was about membership to the RCD constituent community and embracing responsibility, whereas, community support although involved membership at times, was also through alignments. Community ownership entailed a membership around which community support existed. Those with ownership may call upon supporting members or alignments for a particular action at various times, however the responsibility for maintaining the projects momentum remains with those members who have ownership.

“.. Maybe that [enthusiasm] rubbed off, I don’t know, but the feedback and support from the community was incredible. I mean really much more than I would have anticipated.” (2c)

There was a distinction between those driving the process (that is, members with ownership) and the support needed from the broader community. Verbal support did not necessarily translate to action, nor did it result in responsibility and commitment.

“People that were, you’d expect to have been supportive, weren’t. People, I mean we had politicians come down and you know, visit. Well we had one down for the launch .. (affected voice) ‘oh, this is fantastic’. Gave us the big speech, (affected voice) ‘I’ll be in this’ and he never responded, you know, we’d write .. never got a yah or nay. .. You know there are some that

just do it because it's good and others that want the benefit, the profile, without making any commitment." (1a)

The lack of action from some supporters, while disappointing, did not particularly matter in the RCD community processes. Action was required within community ownership, not necessarily within community support, as a key role of support was to reduce resistance rather than take action.

Community support also played a motivating and encouraging role for constituent community members who had taken up ownership.

"And the community got behind us, I mean they become excited about it too I think, or a greater proportion of it. .. which really just gave us more desire, no stronger word than that, incentive yes, motivation to get on with it." (2g)

6: 5.1 Community support processes

Engaging community support through alignments and membership occurred in a number of ways within and across the projects. Sections 5:2.3 and 6:2.1 covered alignments in boundary processes and their significance in the establishment of an RCD community. These processes built community support.

Within the RCD communities it was felt that support was present in the broader community and that it was the responsibility of those with community ownership to access it.

"And the town - that support was out there. Yeah you see, so by us, if we had given up it would have been our fault it had failed because the support was out there." (1c)

RCD communities set about accessing community support in a range of ways. Some projects tested the extent of support through surveys and public meetings.

"Yeah, the initial public meetings were a surprise to see the amount of people that were there. .. they called a public meeting and they got, oh I think two hundred people at the public meeting. Then there was another one during the day .. and there were sort of similar numbers of people. .. yeah, and I suppose we had five hundred, six hundred people out of say three thousand. So it's, yeah, one in six people turned up at the public meeting." (2h)

All communities embarked on marketing the project at some point in the RCD journey. This was seen as selling a concept or opportunity and the reason it can be supported.

".. but when we are selling it, which is what we're doing, it's difficult to know, ideally we're selling the opportunity .." (1a)

"So that's where you sell the concept that it's good for the town to do it." (1c)

While the methods of selling included media, public meetings, street stalls, markets, and utilising the existing connections and networks of members, as the quotes below show, the process of selling was focused around the need within the rural community, the direct benefits brought by the activity to the rural community and building a belief in the RCD concept and associated values.

"the skills that I had I think was that I could talk with people about the benefits of the [project] .. So you got community momentum going." (1b)

"But I think underlying it all is that right through the community there was a recognition of the need" (2c)

"But it was about getting enthusiasm, getting belief .." (1b)

While some would not directly benefit from the activities, they saw a need within the broader community, and believed in the concept. This support was value based.

".. but there's a lot of support for the concept, even though it has no direct benefit to them, they think this is a good idea." (1a)

All RCD communities sought to encourage membership and negotiate boundary alignments for community support through targeted educative processes.

"Within reason I sort of, I'd sit there and I'd say .. 'Who's going to be against it, and why?' And you can usually know. .. at the beginning I would try and involve those people in the process to educate them to start with, so that you get them on board you're half way there." (3c)

Such approaches identified where resistance might occur and actively managed this through engaging these and building support where possible.

Building community support through relationships was an important strategy across the projects.

Developing such a network was humorously likened to “*a mafia*” reflecting a sense of family where people look after their own.

*“.. they’re not going to turn you back when you ring. .. It’s a Mafia (laughter). Well it works.”
(3b)*

Taking the time to develop relationships and friendships built support within the community reducing resistance to the fledging RCD communities.

“.. but I also have the background of working down there before so I have established friendships and things like that which makes it so much easier for me.” (3a)

Community support was tested and engaged through public meetings, and surveys and then through actively marketing the concept and educating people around the benefits for the community. There was also value based support where there was no direct gain but a belief in the concept.

Community support was frequently developed through building relationships where supporting each other was valued. Community support processes were thus founded on alignments and while at times involved actions, they were predominantly about facilitating the RCD by reducing or removing resistance. For those holding community ownership, seeing strong community support was both rewarding and motivating, which also contributed to the impetus of the RCD community activity. Thus where community support was actively managed there was a greater momentum within the RCD community.

6: 6. Comparing Outcomes in the Establishment of Community Identity, Ownership & Support

Each of the RCD constituent communities approached establishing a collective identity differently.

These differences were reflected in outcomes relating to the time taken to establish the RCD community, the communities’ longevity and whether project objectives were achieved. Likewise, the understanding and proactive management of community ownership and support and resulting

impacts on project and RCD communities outcomes, were different in the participating projects. These differences point to important aspects of community ownership and support for RCD.

The instigators of project 1 in Community 1 (RCD1) did not present a clear united identity to the broader community in the initial stages. They managed the boundary processes by actively identifying the different constituent communities within their rural communities, but instead of ascertaining shared values and building alignments, they used the process to actively avoid constituent communities which might involve conflict or that they considered “*destructive*” to their purpose. Two people worked on the project activities and avoided establishing a constituent community around their RCD activity. Negotiating boundaries with other constituent communities and building a strong collective identity, was deferred until it could no longer be avoided.

In this manner, RCD1 also initially lacked sound community ownership of the project. Without an RCD community defined by boundary processes, values and meaning, there were no members to embrace ownership and tasks remained with the RCD initiators. Similarly, while it was stated “*the support was there*”, this could not be accessed while there was no strong presence within the rural community. These in turn slowed the ability to achieve project goals. Yet the project initiators were local and after two years, greater community involvement was sought and boundary negotiation began.

However the prior avoidance of negotiating boundaries resulted in no immediate clear collective values and meanings with which rural community members could identify and build an RCD constituent community. In the absence of presenting values and identity, inaccurate assumptions about perceived project alignments developed within the rural community. These were based on the values associated with other activities of the three members initially progressing the project. For the RCD community identity to be clear, work was needed to dissolve the associated mistrust before greater membership, ownership and support could be attained.

Ownership and support were thus slow to develop as they were not actively managed. The initial leaders kept tight control over tasks and processes, and did not initially build a membership to shape and determine their constituent community. The RCD community was gradually established in the following two years, based on an opportunity to belong and the identified need in the community. Likewise, community ownership and support was then developed, the initial project goal was attained and the RCD and its constituent community continued.

In contrast, project Community 2 (RCD2) began with local founding members who immediately invested time in establishing an RCD constituent community and broad rural community support based around their purpose and key values. Within the first eight weeks RCD2 began presenting a galvanised and focused RCD community identity with a rhetoric which represented the agendas. The rhetoric was so clear that even new members to the project would describe the same key components about need, benefit, and mutual benefit. Members identified the values and agendas defining the boundaries of their establishing community and invited people to join based on these understandings. One of the important values underpinning the community identity was contribution and hard work towards the community purpose.

“the first critical stage was having a group of people who were then made to understand that this wasn’t going to come without a deal of work.” (2i)

RCD2 actively utilised and fostered alignments. They proactively identified the constituent communities within the rural community and managed the boundaries in the establishment of their project in a manner designed to ensure they could represent and receive support from across the rural community.

“.. that’s why they wanted me and [Long-timer 1]. .. because we have been here .. [Member1] knows everyone in their age group and down, and I suppose I go across our age group.” (2a)

They actively managed community ownership, through encouraging this representative membership, and then managing the community’s internal processes to encourage ownership of both the project concept and the responsibility for tasks. Members had a clear knowledge of the

significance of their contribution to the community and their role in the RCD activities which reinforced a sense of belonging, purpose and achievement for their extensive commitment of individual time and resources.

By articulating at the outset the shared meanings and values within the community identity, RCD2 established a constituent community quickly, having reduced the need for time spent negotiating boundary processes around potentially contentious alignments. They focused on the shared values behind the project goals that strengthened alignments in these initial stages thus also gaining high community support. Members felt that being a new constituent community, they didn't have existing enemies and resistance in the rural community and thus support was easy to source. Their project goal was achieved within fourteen months. While the steps of the project came from the same 'how to' manual as RCD1 and had the same funding body, RCD1 took 3 times as long to achieve the same goals as RCD2.

In the third project (RCD3) the development concept was a sensitive social issue that the broader rural community may not have wanted to acknowledge. The project first began with a local official community leader who held it within their formal responsibilities and did not actively share associated information and tasks. By withholding these, there was not an opportunity for the development of a collective identity amongst stakeholders, nor a constituent community around the RCD which could embody community ownership.

There was a second attempt at implementing the project as rural community members continued to signal the need. This time, a range of stakeholders both local and outsiders began to gather around the project. These participants had the project procedure mapped out with clear tasks and responsibilities. Like RCD2 they considered it important to recruit members and instil passion.

"To be perfectly honest I don't know that it will get a long way in the short term, simply because we have to identify suitable people from the community to really get involved and be

passionate about – I mean everyone’s got to be passionate about these things otherwise it just doesn’t happen.” (3f)

They were cognisant of wanting to build a community around the passion to ensure the continuance of the project through embedding ownership in the constituent community culture.

“.. continuity .. with the passion. .. within reason I try to only get involved in programs that .. we can make sustainable ..” (3c)

However, the project participants did not form a new community with its own values, meaning and identity, but instead remained representatives of their existing communities. There was no rhetoric describing, identifying and developing a new constituent community and no galvanising of an identity collectively; - just individuals contributing to a project. Participants approached the project as an RCD and felt it needed strong community ownership to be maintained, but they did not look to engaging broader community support and thus did not build momentum in the community for the concept.

Full ownership remained with the outsiders even though participants all talked about grass roots ownership, embedding the project in the culture, and the importance of shared responsibility to ensure the continuance of the activity. All project members held the first component of ownership believing in the need and the values associated with the project, but only the outsiders held the second component of owning the responsibility for determining and ensuring the completion of tasks.

“And everyone’s just working together now, and no-one has their own agenda. We’ve got an agenda to try and get this program up, get some funding for it. It’s being initiated from the grass roots, so the control has gone back now to the grass roots people. If they (locals) hadn’t come up with the information that we (outside members) required, and the case studies that we required and the letters of support that we required, it wouldn’t have gone to the next step.” (3e)

While there was “*grass-roots*” activity around tasks, the locals continued to await instruction from the outsider members who continued to hold responsibility to drive the process as evidenced in the terms “*we required*”. Ownership of the responsibilities for action was never really handed over to local members. Local stakeholders were providing community support by fulfilling some tasks. The lack of local ownership of tasks was demonstrated when outside leaders left or stopped setting tasks and the project stalled or ceased. Unlike RCD1, no core leaders were locals and when they left, no-one else was driving the project forward. Core leaders experienced community support as a slow frustrating process and the project goal was never reached.

While each of the projects had similar RCD ‘rules’ as their guide, they were applied differently in the manner in which their community identity was developed and the boundaries negotiated. In light of the outcomes, knowing and applying community development steps and tasks was insufficient alone to ensure the engagement and ongoing success of the project. A key aspect was the establishment of an RCD constituent community through the negotiation of boundaries. This included having the language and values of the new community articulated to support the development of a collective identity around which the constituent community could be galvanised. The project that proactively developed an RCD community rapidly attained the project goals. This success was associated with the foundation that a clear community identity provided for the development of community ownership and support. Community ownership appeared most readily where the need for the project in the rural community was clearly validated, where members believed in the values and meaning inherent in the RCD community identity, and where there was the power to act from within the community (self-determination). Projects struggled or ceased where ownership of the responsibility for tasks was not developed locally, even though there was community support in completing tasks. Similarly, high support was built where uncontentious values were visible within the RCD community identity, and there was a clear project need.

6: 7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the implementation of the RCD projects was demonstrated to involve the establishment of a constituent community through boundary processes in identity formation, differentiation with other constituent communities, managing agendas, forming alignments and non-alignments, and managing multiple memberships. Community ownership and support were identified as important and different functions of processes in an establishing RCD community. Themes of leadership and collective power were interwoven throughout RCD community processes.

Chapter Seven: Community Process Modelling and Rural Community Development

Discussion

The motivation for the study was to understand the interaction between rural community development (RCD) and the fabric of the rural community. The aim was to develop theoretical insight into how the dynamics around achieving project objectives affect community processes. Such knowledge could then help to better manage the side effects of RCD. This chapter explores the research findings in light of existing community development knowledge, and develops a model of RCD as part of community processes.

The rural community as process is considered first. This section looks at the interaction of the physical environment with people's experience of community, and highlights a range of intersecting communities as part of the rural community. The boundary processes amongst these constituent communities are identified and discussed in 7:2. Together these sections provide the foundation for understanding RCD in light of community processes and underpin the model presented in 7:3.

Section 7:3 explores RCD as the establishment of a constituent community around the project cause and amongst the existing communities within the rural community. Here the researcher presents a model for understanding RCD community processes and describes these processes throughout the establishment and continued existence of an RCD constituent cause community (RCD community). The relationship of this model with existing community development frameworks is discussed in 7:4.

7: 1. Rural Community as Process

RCD interacted with the fabric of rural communities. This fabric included participants' understanding of what it means to be in, of, and a rural community. The rural environment provided clear

landmarks which encompassed the daily experience of community and contributed to peoples' collective and individual identity. However, in viewing community as a process rather than a prescribed or fixed entity, rural community is a dynamic space where the boundaries and descriptions are contextual and thus temporal. This experience of rural community also involved a multiplicity of communities interacting with and within the rural community. RCD processes interacted with these complexities of community.

Key concepts used to understand these dynamics were the rural community as a process and constituent communities. These concepts are briefly defined in Table 3 before being discussed. Together they provide the foundation of a community processes model for considering the effect of RCD processes upon the rural community fabric.

Rural community		
Encompassed the physical site and the relational community processes occurring within and around the space. This included the experience of living within these spaces, with the particular demographics, norms, stereotypes, shifting boundaries and shared history as these interacted with the collective entities within, around and intersecting the community of place. It involved the experienced meanings and identities of living within the space, while also being defined by members' expression of identity and meaning through community.		
Constituent communities		
Internally identified or externally attributed 'groupings' or collectives which are entities in themselves yet comprise the rural community. The boundaries may extend beyond the physical site, for example via internet membership. Includes three community types: feature, interest and cause.		
Feature based communities	Interest based communities	Cause based communities
A type of constituent community identified through a common feature of members' lives, rather than engagement in activities with one another, and thus may or may not include social interaction within the grouping. Categorisation is attributed by self or other. For example, seniors and new-comers.	A type of constituent community that gathered around a shared interest and knowledge base, without the requirement of creating change through a set activity or goal. A strong common interest is the focus of social interaction which varies in degree and structure. For example the 'arts community' and football club.	A type of constituent community which arose to realise a specific cause, with set goals and agendas to be achieved, and is thus identifiable by the need for action towards a goal to achieve purposive change. Characterised by structured interaction and functioning to achieve the goal. For example people involved with a CD project

Table 3: Rural community as a process of intersecting communities

7: 1.1 Community defined and defining

Rural community as a concept was understood by participants both descriptively and normatively and was an important component in shaping the individual and collective identity of community members. Participants recognised a geographic yet contextually bounded rural community where boundaries were fluid responding to both external pressures and internal perceptions. Within the rural context, the isolation and highly visible boundaries which circumscribed the experience of community were associated with a strong sense of identity and meaning through community, which in turn facilitated engagement in community action. This interaction of boundary, identity and meaning processes has potential implication for policy and RCD practice.

The data clearly identified the parameters of rural community as geographically defined for rural community members. All participants identified the rural community geographically, symbolising the boundaries through landmarks and features of the landscape, and attributing a community identity to those living within these boundaries. These initial responses were descriptive in their approach to understanding community, presenting first the geographically determined space (5: 1.1) and then the relational activity within, which highlighted the constituent communities (5: 1.2). This descriptive concept of community, particularly the rural geographic features, is in keeping with other recent community research literature which similarly describes the connection between “*community identity and territorially based community*” (Colombo & Senatore, 2005, p. 54) and participants’ locality based descriptions of community in the research of Cheers et al (2003).

As participants in the current research moved on to describe the relational activity within the geographically defined space, a normative understanding of rural community also emerged. As with the early concept of *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies, 1957) and other writers writing around the time (eg Durkheim, Weber, Marx), members with a long history in the community had a strong sense that rural community was about close ties in family and friends, economic structure and social and emotional experiences. Like Hunter’s (2007) determination of varying degrees of “*communityness*”

and Cheers et al (2003) assessment of the attributes of a “good” community, long-time rural community members held a range of values they felt epitomised a rural community. They felt this essence of being a rural community was potentially under threat from the increasing number of more recent residents (“new-comers”) whom long-timers felt might not hold the values they considered important living in rural community. Clearly there were normative expectations akin to the judgements of desirability in Cheers et al (2003) findings.

Participants described how the increase in new settlers to the area, with different experiences and ways of life, had changed the experience of rural community for long-term residents. There were new faces in the main street, and new values and expectations were emerging (5: 1.2.1a). Similarly, both local and non-local participants perceived that life within the rural communities involved “*their own culture*” (5: 1.2.1c). The coinciding fear that ‘what it means to be rural’ was being undermined can be understood using Blackshaw’s (2010) conceptualisation of pre- and post- modern community. Participants appeared concerned about losing the meaning attained through a rural community life that resembled “*pre-modern community*”. That is, community as an immutable concept which was a source of meaning through the close ties and structures which determined the foundations of human existence in identity and life roles. What had seemed stable and had defined long term residents’ existence had become contestable.

Like Blackshaw’s (2010) description of post-modern community, rural community boundaries were found to be movable and contestable. Participants’ experience of community involved a constant process of change and paradoxical experiences, where rural community boundaries were fluid and temporal, responding to the context of the purpose for determining boundaries. This is in keeping with the description found in RCD literature of rural community boundaries being ‘recreated’ through locals’ perceptions and interaction (Cheers, et al., 2007; Cheers & Luloff, 2001; Kenny, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2008). Viewed from Cohen’s (1989) perspective, as boundaries are created during social interaction distinguishing between communities, they are subject to change, responding to

the context of the interaction. These contexts include the purpose for identifying boundaries, and the meanings and identities associated with the community, collectively and individually. This was apparent in the current study when participants were discussing RCD activity with outsiders such as the researcher. Predominantly in response to funding criteria, participants focused on the larger region as the rural community, yet when discussing local activity, the experience of rural community was frequently founded around a small town or area within the region. These findings reflect the phenomenological approach found in the literature where community boundaries are described as temporal, dynamic and permeable (Blackshaw, 2010; Cohen, 1989; Kenny, 2006; Shaw, 2008), affected by external policy as well as internal community dynamics.

Rural contextual features were important aspects of rural community identity in their interaction with RCD. Participants identified a clearly defined geographic community to which they belonged and were recognised as being a part of, both from within and from outside of the rural community. The rural community identity was strengthened by the inherent capacity for a boundary defined by the populated/non-populated distinction. This experience was contrasted with city and suburban living where it is frequently more difficult to identify and contain a sense of community identity as defined by a distinct visual boundary (5: 1.1). While the boundary positions of the rural communities described by participants were changeable, they remained highly visible in the distinction between populated and non-populated areas. Finding that the clear geographic boundaries encountered in rural areas contributed to a strong sense of rural community identity, corresponds with research which suggests that small communities and distinct boundaries promote community identification and engagement (Nowell, et al., 2006; Puddifoot, 1996).

Yet community identity and the associated meaning whilst symbolised in landmarks, were not due to the physical boundaries per se so much as the experience of living in community within these clear landmarks. Participants experienced a strong sense of identity, heightened by being able to attribute their experience of rural community within visible boundaries. Landmarks become linked

with a strong sense of identity via participants associating them with the experience of rural community life. This association helps to explain the paradox of experiencing clearly identifiable boundaries which are at the same time fluid, positioned in response to the purpose of their identification. If it is not the physical boundaries per se that provide meaning in life and are the source of collective and individual identity, but the associated experience of rural community living, then it is not necessary for a boundary to be immovable so long as the experiences are contained within the boundary.

This connection between place based community and identity and meaning, is resonant with Connell's (2002) expression of community as a place based communication system that provides meaning and connectedness which in turn makes the world comprehensible. It also reflects other community writings that detail community as a point of reference for identity and meaning (Cohen, 1982; Kenny, 2006; Mewett, 1982), as well as a place for the expression and realisation of identity (Bauman, 2001; Blackshaw, 2010).

A strong sense of belonging and emotional connection with the physical space coincided with engagement in community activity that also contributed to a sense of meaning and identity for participants (5: 1.1). This connection between community action and community identity can be understood through Farrar's (2001) description of the entanglement of community and identity as involving a "*submergence of individual will*", and similarly corresponds with the concept of community as solidarity, or shared identity (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Members' connection to community was passionate, with the resultant community action emerging from less focus on individual will and instead a strong focus on solidarity, involving shared identity and shared well-being.

Even though changing dynamics were acknowledged, the current research found that the rural community experience was still described as "*close knit*", with regular interaction, and a sense of knowing everyone. This experience mirrors the tight social networks acknowledged in rural

community literature (Bourke, 2001b). These interwoven relationships meant that participants experienced highly visible community dynamics in the gossip and politics within these networks. Rural community connectedness was further highlighted in their use of “*word of mouth*” communication about services, events and activities, rather than advertising (5: 1.1). A sense of isolation as a community was also a salient experience of rural community. Such experience is reflective of the documented lack of access to services in rural areas impacting on social, physical and psychological well-being (Bourke, 2001a; Dibden & Cheshire, 2005). However, participants considered that in conjunction with community identity and meaning, the experience of isolation highlighted the need for local action to achieve change, thus further facilitating community engagement and action within their rural communities.

Within RCD, the preceding concept of rural community which encompasses temporal, contextually defined boundaries and relational processes including the interaction with identity and meaning, meets the challenge in the literature for a conceptualisation that is sufficiently complex to respond to the complexity and paradox that is the experience of community (Burkett, 2001; Cheers, et al., 2003). Based on this study and supported by the research already discussed, the relationship with identity, meaning and the fabric of the community is important in defining rural community. This entails:

- a. rural community members’ recognition of a geographically defined yet contextually bounded rural community, where boundary movement is widely in response to external agendas such as political policy;
- b. that well-defined community boundaries correspond with increased capacity for identification and engagement in community; and
- c. the entanglement of community, identity and meaning such that individuals are strongly connected to their community, both expressing and finding meaning and identity within engagement in community.

An implication of understanding rural community in this manner is that government policy defining rural community for RCD funding has the potential to influence the extent of identification with, and thus engagement in, community activity. In the same way that Shaw (2008) and Brent (1997) argued that external policy impacts community boundaries and meanings, when rural community boundaries are imposed by classifications and funding agendas without reference to the local experience (Bourke & Lockie, 2001) it affects the community fabric. The experience of community is redefined for members, bringing together a diversity of rural community identities which might not otherwise join as a community identity, with the resultant boundary and identity negotiation dynamics. Similar concerns have been expressed regarding the consequence for projects and communities, of the difference between the boundaries of the rural areas funded compared to the community areas with which residents identify (Taylor, et al., 2008). All of these findings suggest that in classifying rural communities, work such as the notion of social catchments (Hugo, et al., 2001) is highly relevant for RCD. Although these social catchments were described by Hugo et al (2001) as 'communities of interest', they resemble place based communities as a relational process connected to members' sense of individual and collective identity, and are akin to the understanding of rural community highlighted in the current thesis.

The current research builds on and brings together existing academic and grassroots understanding of rural community as a concept that at once defines members through the experienced meaning and identity, and is defined in members' expression of identity and meaning through community. Rural community is thus defined both descriptively and normatively with strong reference to the distinct geographic boundaries encountered in rural areas. However, reflecting the concept of post-modern community, these boundaries are fluid, being both movable and contestable. Identity and community are intricately intertwined, leading to a strong connection between clearly distinguishable boundaries and robust community identity and in turn, a passion for community which translates into action. Motivation for community action is further reinforced by members' experience of and response to rural community as close social networks, coinciding with highly

visible community dynamics and geographic isolation. Hence, external influences that interact with boundary identification, accordingly affect community identity and members engagement in community activity (including RCD) and in turn, the overall fabric of the community.

7: 1.2 Constituent communities

There were multiple communities associated with RCD which were identifiable through boundary processes. These communities will be referred to as constituent communities to convey the interaction with and within the rural community. Discerning how these interact in the RCD implementation process can contribute to understanding the resultant effect within the fabric of the community.

By conceptualising community through focusing on how the term is used in the course of living, it has been possible to avoid what Connell (2002) saw as the ontological consequences of accepting the individual-community-society schema. It becomes possible to conceptualise community in a manner that responds to the complexity and paradoxes of community and move beyond debate regarding the relevance of community or polarising place based and non-place based conceptualisation. As observers of and participants in the construct of community used within this research, participants not only described the geographic rural community and its significance, but also many other communities to which they belonged and with which their project interacted. Within these descriptions community is used in a relational sense to distinguish either difference or commonality. Its definition is found in meanings, values and symbols associated with each community identity, as communities interacted. In this manner, communities were most easily identified at their boundaries and were particularly apparent in the process of boundary negotiation. This is the process of differentiation to which Shaw (2008) refers, and the boundary processes detailed in Cohen's (1989) work.

The concept of multiple communities within place based community has been well documented (eg Barbesino, 1997; Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Hunter, 2007; Larsen, 1982; Taylor, et al., 2008) as has the

resultant multiple membership of individuals across a range of communities at any one time (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Cohen, 1982a, 1982b; Cohen, 1989; Kenny, 2006; Mannarini & Fedi, 2009).

The findings for the current research indicate that the boundary processes involved in multiple memberships were highlighted by RCD activities and accordingly, are important to consider in RCD implementation.

The term 'constituent communities' has been chosen in the current research to understand how the multiplicity of communities found in rural communities interact in relation to RCD. The designation of 'constituent' to describe these communities within community, reflects that while entities in themselves, combined they comprise the rural community. The choice of terminology is drawn from an understanding of the word constituent as "*an artefact that is one of the individual parts of which a composite entity is made up; especially a part that can be separated from or attached to a system ...*" (Princeton University, 2001), and as "*serving to form, compose, or make up a unit or whole*" (Merriam-Webster, 2012).

Within the relational processes of RCD, constituent communities were accentuated in boundary processes. They were apparent (internally or externally attributed) as communities in their own right, yet were part of the rural community. In this manner the rural community while a place based, geographically defined community subject to differentiating boundary processes, served as the "*whole community*", within and around which the other communities sat. Likewise, the constituent communities were subject to the same dynamic processes and shifting boundaries as the "*whole community*". Cohen (1982c) describes a similar process in his account of different fishing communities coming together as a larger fishing community (or as Cohen accounts, an "*organic collective*") for the purpose of a blockade. As in the current research, participants identified as the separate constituent communities, until responding to outsiders of the "*whole community*", at which point a collective consciousness was then expressed as being members of the 'whole'.

So RCD processes interacted not only with the place based rural community but also with other constituent communities. A better understanding of community processes can be reached by considering the constituent communities' aetiologies. The different foundations behind their existence translated into different needs for structure, the manner of community structure, the need for and character of community organisational processes and the corresponding boundary processes. This is particularly relevant to the continued existence and changing membership of communities. Some communities require more structure to survive and therefore have more clearly articulated boundary processes. Based on their aetiology the communities described fell into three categories: feature-based, interest-based and cause-based. Briefly defined in Table 3, the following explains them in further detail.

7: 1.2.1 Feature-based communities

Some communities presented by participants existed purely due to the members holding a common feature, so are being described in this research as feature-based communities ('feature communities' for brevity). They relate to the use of community to encompass commonalities such as demographic, psychological and social factors and in this sense do not fall within a normative or purely sociological conceptualisation of community as involving interaction (Blackshaw, 2010; Taylor, et al., 2008). They are instead, part of the detail within a descriptive conceptualisation, and were highlighted as part of the relational processes in RCD. Their existence as a community relates to the concept of social identity which does not require interaction to exist, but purely one's self categorisation creating in or out groupings (Reisch & Guyet, 2007). From the perspective of this research, such groupings would be identified as a feature community boundary process. As a boundary process it was observed that the categorisation may also be attributed by another, not just by self.

Those who argue that community exists only where there is social interaction would argue that some 'groupings' included within the current research as feature communities, do not constitute

community. Yet these 'groupings' were identified in the same manner as communities with significant social interaction, through boundary processes and the associated links with identity and meaning as they interacted with RCD processes. This arguably points to the imprecision of determining communities through boundaries, and is further discussed in the last part of this section. Based on a) the premises of accepting the term community in its multiplicity of uses and understanding rural community as process, and b) the likeness of processes and function, they are included as feature communities, while acknowledging the difference in quality of the relational facet within these communities.

Feature communities are frequently only loosely structured due to membership existing by virtue of the common feature rather than on a membership that regularly meets together to consciously engage in a form of interaction. Where there is interaction within these communities it may be intermittent, infrequent and not inclusive of all those perceived to be part of the community. At times structured processes may occur in association with feature communities, for example, 'seniors' or 'youth' activities, however engagement with these structures was not necessary for membership, as the boundaries of feature communities were determined by a person being considered to hold that particular feature.

Yet within the RCD processes, they were considered a collective entity in determining how they would be engaged or accounted for within the implementation process. The rural community as described in 5:1.1 is an example of a feature community where the common feature is experiencing life within a particular geographic space. This was a paradox in that the rural community was also the whole community previously described. Further examples of feature communities that were highlighted by the research participants as significant in the process of RCD projects included those where the boundaries were defined in relation to: the length of connection with the rural community; the amount of time currently spent in the rural community; having a base in the community; age and social economic status (5: 1.2.1). Given the research is a snapshot in time and

the dynamic nature of community, there may have been a range of other feature communities that were significant in their interactions in any one of the RCD projects, which were not active or described at the time of data collection.

Highlighted in both the literature (Cohen, 1989; Kenny, 2006; Shaw, 2008) and the current research is that the purpose or the perspective of the person identifying a boundary affected its position, and that this boundary process was apparent even for feature communities. Feature community boundaries can be fluid, responding to subtle changes of purpose or need. For example, boundaries relating to length of connection with the rural community were very fluid. In the eyes of those with local family heritage, 20 years living in the rural community is still a new-comer, whereas in the eyes of members of less than three years residence in the rural community, 20 years equates to a long-timer. The fluidity of this boundary related to the historical memory associated with the rural community and the sense of identity and connection this experience of rural community provided members, and which in turn afforded the right to decide on appropriate changes within the rural community. However, there were also different perceptions attributed to the long-timer communities, being variably described as “*insular*” and “*welcoming*”, further highlighting that these communities and boundaries exist in peoples’ experiences, not as fixed entities.

The long-timer and new-comer constituent communities are also apparent in other community literature describing the interaction of “*natives versus new-comers*” (Hunter, 2007). However, the term long-timer has been used in this research as being more encompassing of the fluidity of the boundary process described above. While some rural community members were seen to be “*born and bred*” with families there “*for generations*” (5: 1.2.1a) and might therefore be described as natives, other participants with a substantial period of residency and thus personal experience of the rural community history were also at times included.

While feature communities were identifiable through a common feature, boundary processes were apparent in the tensions associated with perceived discrepant values and cultures. These were

described in association with the long-timers and new-comers, with being considered local or non-local, as well as the experience of being “*haves’ and have nots*”. Long-timers were not confident that their experiences, views and values were understood by the “*people moving in*” and expressed offence when these were not acknowledged. Similarly, non-locals (who participated in the rural communities due to employment) and resident new-comers were very conscious of being considered to not have the same understanding of local knowledge. They juggled the tensions through accepting their status as “*a Johnny-come-lately*”, as “*outsiders*” or “*fly-ins*”, and by, where possible, not reducing employment opportunities for locals (5: 1.2.1c).

Tensions associated with affluence related boundaries were described in the values and culture attributed to these communities (5: 1.2.1e). They were contrasted by participants as an elite community which valued material possessions and appearance versus a ‘true’ rural culture which had “*soul*” and values based in a hands-on experience of the world. The permeable nature of these boundary processes was apparent in the capacity for some community members to straddle the boundary. These participants highlighted the tensions between these communities, describing the need to be “*very careful*” as they moved between and amongst both communities.

While the comparison above is similar to the stereotyped and ideological perceptions of rural community versus city life documented in the literature (Finkelstein & Bourke, 2001), these constituent communities were not purely attributed by external discourses and ideologies, so much as through how participants perceived their experience of boundary processes on a day to day basis. In this sense they are similar to Gray and Phillips’ (2001) description of farming and town cultures within rural communities, however the current research identified cultural differences more in response to the changing population demographics of rural communities.

Other boundary processes more directly relating to RCD and feature communities are discussed in section 7:3.

7: 1.2.2 Interest-based communities

The concept of communities of interest is already documented in community literature (eg Blackshaw, 2010; Desjardins, et al., 2002; Kenny, 2006; Komaromi, 2003; Taylor, et al., 2008).

However the term has been used more broadly than is proposed in the current study. As described in 3:1.1, communities of interest have been understood to include 'groupings' with varying degrees of interaction around a common interest, including recreational, political and spiritual pursuits. In narrowing the concept to be where a strong common interest creates a focus for interaction but where there is no requirement for set activities or goals (ie to exclude those that would be categorised as cause-based communities as detailed below), these will be described as interest-based communities (or interest communities for brevity).

Interest communities while sometimes active around the common interest, need not be overly structured for the sharing of interest-based information to occur. The function of interest communities as understood in this research is purely about connecting to share a joint interest. Interest communities in the current research framework therefore do not include the communities which arise to achieve change goals, such as campaigning for a service, as these have a different purpose, function and structures associated with creating change.

There were a multiplicity of interest communities within the rural communities studied including communities based around sporting activities, artistic, musical and craft pursuits (5: 1.2.2). Interest communities were some of the more easily recognised communities as the strong common interest at their core helped define their existence and they were thus named by their interest, for example, the "*angling club*", the "*arts community*", and the "*bowling club*". Additionally, they were also noticeable through boundary processes. Members' passion for their interest made these communities visible in the associated activities and boundary processes within the rural community. The boundaries were not always accompanied by high conflict, yet members' passion sometimes resulted in tensions which were frequently recognised as participants moved amongst other

communities in which they were also members. For example, where participants came together within a community of cause, but were also members of different interest communities, tension emerged and passion was expressed regarding these differences. In this manner, it is through the boundary processes associated with the focal interest and passion that interest communities were determined, and not through a set membership, as individuals may be members of multiple interest communities.

Interest communities appear to be akin to what Blackshaw (2010) describes as cleave communities. They vary in form and processes, with some loosely structured while others more tightly structured, and yet all functioning as a space where members express their identity in relation to the common interest. Given that membership may wax and wane, these communities are susceptible to interruption of continuance. This is in keeping with Blackshaw's argument that they only exist while people continue to choose to belong, with their fundamental importance being in providing a space to experience a sense of identity in relation to living amongst others.

Regardless of how lasting various interest communities may be, within place based communities, this role in connecting people is significant for RCD. Desjardins et al (2002) argued that the interaction between place based and interest based communities is important for rural areas. This view was also held by participants in this research who considered that people interconnecting across a range of interests established opportunities for social interaction and experiencing a sense of community connectedness and identity, thus strengthening the capacity to then respond as a collective in processes such as RCD (5: 1.1 & 5:2.3.2). The boundary processes associated with constituent communities (including interest communities) and RCD will be discussed in 7:3.

7: 1.2.3 Communities of cause

Communities of cause are identified in this research as an important aspect in the fabric of the community and RCD. The term 'cause' was used by participants to describe particular community activities, and is based on the meaning: *"a goal or principle served with dedication and zeal"*

(Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009). While literature on communities tends to combine cause and interest communities under the descriptor 'communities of interest', they have been separated in this study as the function of a community of cause differs to interest communities. Communities of cause are about purposive change as they arise to forward a particular cause through a specific goal or activity. While it might be considered that the cause is a common interest, associated with the cause are clear goals and accompanying agendas related to the purposive change to be achieved.

Communities of cause are defined by the need for action towards a goal, whereas an interest community gathers around a shared interest and knowledge base, without the requirement of purposive change through their activities. Interest communities need not be as structured to fulfil the role of sharing the interest, however, in order for a community of cause to fulfil the function of attaining the goals around which it is established, planned and structured processes underpin the communities' functioning in both the establishment and maintenance of the community. In this manner, cause communities are an example of the organisation behind purposive social change at a community level which develops as an adaptive response the crecive change in their environment (Warren 1971).

A number of cause communities were evident in the findings. These included those associated with RCD projects striving to attain services for the community, those apparent reacting to structural development within the rural towns and those promoting differing approaches to the use of land within the rural areas (5: 1.2.3). As cause communities were about action, in progressing their agendas there were highly visible boundary processes in their interactions with other communities, particularly with other cause communities when there was conflict around their respective values and agendas. For example, within each of the rural communities participants described a division based on those who supported significant commercially driven structural changes such as multistorey buildings and land real estate developments (termed here as 'development community'), and those who sought to maintain the status quo so to preserve what they felt was

important about being in a rural community (termed here as ‘status –quo community’). The development community members saw such structural change as progressive, whereas status-quo members saw it as undermining what they valued in the rural community culture. Conflict between these communities led to power struggles as each pushed ahead with their agendas. Where developers successfully pushed ahead with contentious change, a strong sense of injustice and mistrust emerged from status quo members.

Similarly, a conservation or “*alternative*” community of cause with a high representation of newcomers was prominent as participants discussed their communities. Participants highlighted the conflict of different values and an ongoing tension within rural communities as the conservation community interacted with forestry and agriculture communities. Yet there was also perceived positive changes from these interactions as some participants felt they had learnt from these interplays around different values. As well as highlighting the role of values, this was an example of the changes occurring within rural communities as described in 2:3.1, as long term residents sought to adjust to the new ideas, experiences and expectations of community life (Barr, 2005; Bourke, 2001b; Murphy, 2006).

Communities of cause thus highlighted the role of values in establishing agendas within constituent communities, as there were clear connections between the founding values and the purpose for the community’s existence. Members focused on the common values found within the cause and in this manner, it was the purpose and agendas that defined cause communities through the associated boundary processes, not the specific individuals in the community membership. As demonstrated in the findings (5: 2.3.2), it is possible for two different cause communities to hold an almost identical membership base, yet have distinct collective identities founded in the associated agendas and goals of each cause community. (The role of agendas is discussed in 7:2.1.)

The cause was expressed by participants as being associated with a strong attachment to the rural community, motivating both action for change and resistance to change. Participants wanted what

they considered 'best' for their community, based on the values each held. However, cause community boundaries like the boundary processes of the previously described communities, were also observed to be fluid. Membership of the development and status-quo communities changed in response to the specific development proposals yet continued to be founded in what participants believed was in the best interests of the whole community. This again suggests that cause community membership occurred particularly in response to values and agendas.

These boundary processes are all part of the complex dynamics frequently referred to in RCD literature as a challenge for practitioners and participants alike. It is proposed here that this is not only because they are part of the context within which an RCD project occurs, but also because RCD manifests as constituent communities of cause, subject to the same boundary processes as other constituent communities and the rural community. These boundary processes are discussed further in section 7:2, with their role in RCD constituent communities further explored in section 7:3.

7: 1.3 Community processes and rural community development

In embracing rural community as all the processes and dynamics associated with a geographically defined space, the concept of constituent community contributes to modelling the dynamic processes with which RCD processes interact.

In keeping with Vergunst's (2006) case that it is necessary to know which constructions of communities are most important within place based communities, the current research identified the boundaries highlighted by RCD processes. Common across the participating rural communities were 'long-timers' and 'new-comers', 'non-locals', youth and seniors, the "*haves and have nots*", sporting and music interest communities, other RCD communities, development and status-quo communities, conservation, forestry and agricultural communities. While the prevalent nature of these communities suggests they are likely to be important considerations within other RCD projects, the constituent communities identified in any one rural community will be specific to place and time. Accordingly, the constituent communities and associated dynamics presented in the

findings (5: 1.2) may provide an indication of likely dynamics to be juggled, but this list could not be considered exhaustive nor necessarily representative, or most important for RCD in all rural communities. The dynamics of the boundary processes identified in relation to RCD projects will be discussed in section 7:3.

By approaching communities as processes rather than objects, and through acknowledging constituent communities, polarisation of functional and territorial community is avoided and indeed the two become integrated. Rather than seeing functional communities as too segmented for the purposes of community development (Ife, 2002) conceptualising them as constituent communities integral with rural community as a relational process, highlights that they are an essential component within RCD processes.

The concept of constituent communities relates to terms within community literature such as 'communities within communities', sub-communities or nested communities (Brodsky & Marx, 2001), however these terms do not easily communicate the permeable and intertwined nature of constituent community and rural community boundaries. Some constituent communities may extend beyond the geographically defined space. This was evidenced through the 'non-local' community who were highly active and developed strong relationships within the rural community due to their vocational roles (5: 1.2.1c). Similarly, although not mentioned by participants, such influence and input could occur through interest communities which can also have internet membership communication. The use of social media and the influence of virtual communities have potential influence intersecting with the more locally founded constituent communities. Thus the concept of constituent communities is responsive to the fluidity or permeability of community boundaries while still relating to the rural context. These permeable boundary processes are also examples of vertical social patterning (Cheers, et al., 2007; Taylor, et al., 2008) while at the same time connecting back across the constituent communities in horizontal social patterns as included in the community strength model described in 3:3.2. In this manner, the idea of constituent

communities avoids Brent's (1997) concern of emphasising unity through not including the community influences beyond the place based community boundaries. The constituent community concept encompasses permeable and fluid boundary processes as it conceptualises communities which are distinct in themselves and can extend beyond physical bounding, but are still part of the sum of the whole rural community.

It has been argued that using boundary processes to define communities is too broad (Blackshaw, 2010). From this viewpoint it might be considered that what is really being described are the group processes of informal and formal groups (Reisch & Guyet, 2007). Certainly the shared values and people are common both to small group and constituent community concepts. However, small groups within communities have also been defined as including qualities of personal contact and interaction (see Reisch & Guyet, 2007) which would not necessarily encompass feature communities as described in 7:1.2.1 and in 5:1.2.1. However, by addressing community as a relational process as it is experienced it is possible to encompass the breadth, complexity and fluidity of community in all its forms. Likewise, the constituent communities outlined in this research are all identified as existing through and being subject to, the same boundary processes, and can thus be modelled as community processes without adding additional concepts such as groups.

In this way, for the purposes of modelling community processes to understand community dynamics around RCD projects, the notion of constituent communities enables a simple yet encompassing model. Such modelling focuses on the relational processes of rural communities rather than the detail of the internal processes which the conception of groups leans towards. The concept of constituent communities of rural communities instead provides an avenue to explore the boundary processes that create and maintain the collective identities and meanings that affect the fabric of the community.

Within this modelling, RCD not only requires the navigation of constituent communities of the rural community, but also interacts as a constituent cause community subject to the same boundary

processes as other constituent communities and the rural community. Key boundary processes from the findings will be discussed in section 7:2, and their relationship specifically with the RCD community will be discussed in section 7:3.

Understanding community as a relational process of boundary differentiation has been applied to ethnic and culture case communities within predominantly ethnographic studies, as well as the impact of policy development on community development (eg Shaw, 2008) and in understanding community cohesion (eg Vergunst, 2006). However, research modelling community boundary processes in relation to RCD appears absent in RCD literature. The following explores RCD in terms of its engagement in the complex and fluctuating rural and constituent community meanings, values, and boundaries processes, as they impact individuals and the fabric of community.

7: 2. Boundary Processes of Constituent Communities

In this research, rural and constituent communities have been determined through boundary processes with other communities. As presented in the literature review, the existence and relevance of the dynamic process of boundary identification in community differentiation has been described in a range of community literature, as has the interconnection with identity and meaning (Brent, 1997; Burkett, 2001; Cheers & Luloff, 2001; Cnaan & Breyman, 2007; Cohen, 1982, 1982a, 1982c; Colombo & Senatore, 2005; Connell, 2002; Dixon, et al., 2003a). When participants described their activities within the rural community, membership of various constituent communities and their associated boundaries were highlighted. Boundary identification was simultaneously associated with the meaning and identity that being in, or of, community provided members (individually and collectively) and with that which members attributed to the community. Also apparent were the boundary processes that created, maintained and shaped the different constituent communities and inherently, the fabric of the rural community.

Due to the changing nature of community boundaries, any description of constituent community boundaries can only be at a point in time; a snap shot at the time of the interview and description. They are fluid and so only the boundaries that existed at that moment can be described and discussed. This is the paradox – the boundary cannot be drawn and described definitively because it is never truly fixed and shifts in response to coming into contact with another community boundary. However, the snapshot provides insight into a perpetual process of community change which can be used to understand each community and the processes surrounding RCD. By modelling community processes in their interaction with RCD processes, new insights in the processes of RCD and community can be found.

Boundary processes highlighted in the doing of RCD included the processes of agendas, alignments and symbolic expression. How these concepts are understood for the current research is outlined in Table 4 and their characteristics and function are further discussed in the rest of this section. These processes could be likened to Connell's (2002) description of community being about communicative events rather than subjects and action. Each of these processes were effects of the expression of the individual and collective meaning, identity and associated values found in membership of constituent communities. These processes also acted as tools in that they contributed to the construction, maintenance and demise of constituent communities.

Agenda	An underlying principle, motive or ideal around which a community exists. When voiced or actioned, an agenda is thus the active expression of the values of the community.
Alignment	The nature of communities' associations with one another. For a community or community member to be aligned means either being within the same community boundary or being able to negotiate a community boundary to find sufficient agreement/similarity such that the two communities can be seen to have support towards an action, value or ideal.
Symbolic Expression	The use of action, language or physical structure to represent the meaning / significance of a community and signify the boundaries of difference between communities.

Table 4: Community boundary processes

7: 2.1 Agendas

Agendas associated with the purpose, values, meaning and identity of belonging to various constituent communities were apparent as participants described collective activities. These underlying principles, motives or ideals (Oxford University Press, 2007) were held collectively and informed community interactions thus affecting community boundary processes. However, they were not usually described as agendas, unless there were negative connotations. Participants more readily acknowledged agenda's held by individuals, particularly where they were perceived as a negative influence designed for personal benefit.

Agendas are acknowledged within community development literature to be an integral aspect of community dynamics. A general review of community development journals reveals an acknowledgement of agendas not only of community development projects, but also within the environment in which they interact. Terms frequent in the literature include government agendas, economic agendas, political agendas, neo-liberal agendas, social agendas and hidden agendas. Emanating both internally and externally to the community (Beer, 2000; Cheers, et al., 2003; Cheers, et al., 2002), agendas are presented as important aspects of "*the community factor*" in the application of CIT to rural communities (Cheers, et al., 2003; Cheers & Luloff, 2001) presented in 3:3.2. However, agendas are not explored within community development literature in regard to their role in community boundary processes.

Agendas represented the meaning a boundary held for a community - the significant components of belonging and identity associated with community membership. Further, an agenda was the active expression of the values of the community. These functions of agendas in community boundary processes were highlighted in the capacity for conflict when community members were confronted with differing values and likewise in the resistance to or complete lack of compromise over the core values held within a community. The presence of the agenda signified the process of maintaining or negotiating or constructing a boundary, demonstrating that the agenda was the activity that

established the existence and significance of the role of individual and collective identity and meaning.

As an active expression of community values, agendas were presented in the process of establishing new communities' boundaries, and the values and meanings around which the collective identity is built. In voicing values and ideals, members negotiated existing community values or started the process to establish new communities founded on the expressed values. This process for RCD communities is discussed in section 7:3.2.

Applying an understanding of the function of agendas to community as a process of differentiation, conflicting agendas particularly defined the community identity as separate from another community, demonstrating difference. The findings presented three sets of strongly contrasted values in the rural communities participating, those found in the: forestry/agriculture and green/alternative constituent community interactions; 'progressive' development and social values; and funding source with community voice.

As outlined in the findings, conflict was regularly apparent at these communities' boundaries, and emotive language was used by members in each constituent community about the other, intimating the strength of meaning the issues presented for members. These communities were unable to compromise the core values that identified their community, for example, regarding land, the Greens' prime focus was on the environmental and social issues while within forestry and agricultural communities the focus was on resources and resource management. While there was acknowledgement that the members of each community are likely to be 'good people', there was not an understanding that the foundation of the differences was in the values of each community. Compromise was not a consideration because this foundation shaped not only the collective, but the individual identity and meaning for existence.

Similarly, people also chose membership to various constituent communities based on how strongly progressive development versus social agendas existed within the communities' core values (5:2.2.2). A progressive agenda was described as pushing for economic growth and development throughout the rural communities and was contrasted with seeking to preserve a sense of history and a lifestyle that valued social interaction, connectedness and belonging. Within these boundary processes, each side acknowledged the others' values, but maintained a clear priority. Those with an economic focus saw social benefit as a flow on effect of their progressive agenda, and likewise a social agenda did not exclude growth, but wanted to "*let it grow natural*". Participants distinguished that these values existed across a range of constituent communities and when experienced firsthand, described making very clear decisions with regard to which side of the boundary they belonged at that time.

In development literature, two agendas of constant tension for those involved in RCD are found in the differences of top-down and bottom-up approaches (Beer, 2000; Brawley, 1994; Cavaye, 2001; Cheers & Hall, 1994; Cheers, et al., 2002; de Berry, 1999; Garlick & Pryor, 2002a; Hayward, et al., 2004; Kenny, 2006; Montero, 2005; Ritchie, et al., 2004; Sorensen, et al., 2002; Stockdale, 2004; Summers, 1986). These dynamics are clearly highlighted in the funding source versus community voice agendas described in 5:2.2.3. Funding for a range of activities within the rural communities came with clear agendas tied back to strategic documents. However, locals saw the potential to simultaneously address a range of community needs, and were frustrated by not being responded to as "*the local eyes and ears*" in determining what was in the best interests of the rural community.

Conflicting constituent community agendas within rural communities were part of the complex dynamics that comprised the community fabric and in which RCD constituent communities were created. These processes for RCD communities are discussed in 7:3.2. There are many implications for RCD in understanding agendas as an expression of community values, and the associated meaning and identity. These are discussed in the next chapter.

Other values and associated agendas appeared to exist across a number of constituent communities that did not seem contentious for other constituent communities, which suggests they were less significant in the boundary processes defining a community as separate from another. This did not suggest they were not significant in the identity and meaning for members as they still arose as agendas described in community activities. These agendas were common in motivating RCD communities' activities. They were values that informed decision-making and actions of these communities and within this rousing of the actions of the community, became agendas. While significant in the meaning and purpose of RCD communities, they were not the facets defining one community's identity as separate to another and are therefore discussed in section 7: 3.3.

7: 2.2 Alignment

The nature of communities' associations with one another is being described in this research, as alignments. Based on the findings, for a constituent community or community member to be aligned means either being within the same community boundary or being able to negotiate a community boundary to find sufficient agreement/similarity such that the two communities can be seen to have support towards an action, value or ideal. These negotiations were founded in the values and meaning within each constituent community, and in their expression through agendas. Alignments were examples of the successful negotiating of community boundaries to achieve a purposed result. However, the boundary processes of understanding and navigating these, although described as taking *"the politics and the alliances and things into account before you work out how to implement it"*, were not always a conscious process amongst the constituent communities.

The existence of alignments is not a new concept. While not defined as a boundary process as above, they have been described in different ways in community and community development literature. For example, in exploring the idea of community as small groups, Reisch and Guyet (2007) highlight work which describes communities as a multitude of groups with varying degrees of connection. These degrees of connection are considered in the current study through their

interaction as boundary processes in the concepts of alignment and non-alignment. Similarly there is a plethora of literature viewing communities through relational systems, networks and social circles which encompasses the quality of the differing connections (Barbesino, 1997). The concept of alignments describes these connections and their function as a community boundary process in RCD.

Participants variously described processes of having contacts, links and '*networks*' through social interests and vocations and their importance in resourcing activities, gaining support and understanding current community dynamics so to make informed decisions in the RCD process. In this sense, the concept of alignments as an RCD boundary process is similar to literature that describes the importance and character of networks in their role of enabling the capacity to resource and increase the success of RCD (Cavaye, 2001; Cnaan, et al., 2007; Flora, 1993). The Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure framework for example (Flora & Flora, 1993), notes the importance of the quality of networks. This signifies the role of alignments in accessing the resources needed for projects to progress. In a similar manner bridging and linking social capital (Flora, 1998; Flora & Flora, 1993; Putnam, 2000) could also be considered examples of the management of alignment boundary processes.

Yet while alignments connect constituent communities through building on networks, they are more than networks in that they identify the boundary process qualities within the connection. As discussed further in the following, alignments are closely associated with the identity of constituent communities. The existence of alignment processes indicates that if the impact on the rural community fabric of establishing an RCD constituent community is to be proactively managed, it is important to understand what community alignments exist, how they work and the potential boundary processes.

Three styles of alignments in association with RCD were identified in the research: those between individuals of different constituent communities, those due to multiple membership and those

formalised between two collectives. The first was an example of how individual members accessed networks, connecting with an individual from outside the constituent community who held skills, knowledge or resources that facilitated achieving RCD outcomes (5: 2.3.1). By association the respective constituent communities of the individuals became aligned; other members of each community or from across the rural community membership perceived the connection as implying complementary values across the two communities.

The second was through membership across multiple communities (5: 2.3.2), a phenomenon well documented in community literature and presented in the literature review as enabled by the permeable nature of boundaries and the fluid relationship between identity and community. Holding membership in more than one constituent community led to alignments particularly when these memberships were highly visible within the rural community. Multiple membership alignments inherently brought boundary processes that needed constant management and affected the fabric of the rural community. Participants described *“a real small group of people that are making things happen”* within the rural community. Rural community literature documents the effect of multiple roles for individuals in juggling daily social interactions, and the experience of fatigue of volunteers and community leaders (Bourke, 2001b; Cavaye, 2001).

The role of multiple memberships in community alignment processes in RCD highlights the significance of values as the basis of alignment. Multiple memberships occurred most freely where the values associated with the different communities were compatible. Where there were both overlapping and different values between two aligned communities, observers assumed alignment across all values and made decisions about their own relationship to each community based on these perceptions. For example, when a new cause community was being established around an RCD project, one instigating member also held a high profile within the forestry community. Some rural community members chose not to be involved with or support the actions of the new community, perceiving there to be an alignment with forestry values.

Emphasised throughout the interviews were three values found to be common across multiple membership alignments: the importance of a physically welcoming environment, the community directing its own destiny through a strong local voice, and social interaction. These reflect what has been described in community development literature as facets of good community (Cheers, et al., 2003; Hunter, 2007; Warren 1988) and are values found in the underpinning principles of community development as presented in the literature review. In this manner these normative values are highlighted in the multiple membership alignment process.

Multiple membership alignment processes also reinforce that while individuals were an important interactive dynamic in community, they did not define a community. Through multiple membership, some constituent communities had very similar membership, yet were recognised internally and externally to be separate communities due to holding a different purpose or agenda for their existence. As described in 7:2.1, the community purpose and agenda defined a community in conjunction with the ongoing boundary processes of differentiation, rather than the specific membership details.

The third style of alignment was directly between collectives, whereby a formalised arrangement between two communities was created, usually around sharing a needed resource or through a mutually beneficial activity founded in common values (5: 2.3.3). These are consistent with literature regarding community partnerships (for example see Department of Transport and Regional Services, 2005; Forde, 2001; Garlick & Pryor, 2002a). As such, the concept of boundary processes may be useful in understanding the dynamics of partnerships.

Regardless of the manner in which an alignment developed, as alignments were founded in common values across the communities the associated identity with each community remained intact for the member of the alignment. This was particularly true for cause communities such as newly established RCD communities, and was demonstrated in participants maintaining their social patterns and only functioning as a community for the purpose of the RCD. Alignment boundary

processes in RCD are therefore not about reconstructing boundaries or necessarily reconstructing meaning for communities. The constituent communities are an example of a space for the expression of identity as discussed in the literature review, and the alignments are about links and connections bringing the communities identifiably alongside one another in the path of community activities.

Active non-alignment was evident where members did not want their community to be seen as being allied with another community, usually in direct response to differing values, agendas and related activities associated with the respective constituent communities. Non-alignment ensued when there was conflict or mistrust and a felt need to demonstrate difference with another constituent community, both for the benefit of members within each community and for the rural community in general (5: 2.3.4). Larsen (1982) similarly identified avoidance as a boundary process used in managing communities in conflict. However, this describes a way of sharing place based community space while avoiding confrontation and open conflict. Non-alignment differs in that while it too is a boundary process in managing cohabitating amongst conflict, it was about demonstrating difference and independence of another set of values (which has the potential to incite conflict depending on the manner in which it is done), not a strategy for avoiding conflict.

Active non-alignments also highlighted the relationship between alignment and identity.

Participants gave examples where rural community members perceived an alignment of values between two constituent communities (Forestry and an RCD community) due to shared membership between each community. Such perceptions indicated that without additional information, onlookers' assumed a new constituent community to involve the known values associated with other constituent communities to which members' belonged. This perception was erroneous as the project purpose and RCD community focus had no connection with Forestry practices or principles. RCD community members' sense of collective identity did not include land use oriented values. Thus

there was a need for active and visible non-alignment where a perceived connection might negatively affect the RCD community.

In this research, the role of alignments has been considered in relation to RCD and community processes. The preceding discussion demonstrates that there are close relationships between alignments, identity, meaning and constituent community agendas. These relationships are found in understanding alignments as more than links and network building, instead considering the dynamics of boundary processes within the rural community. Alignments between constituent communities, perceived or real, affected the overall community fabric, as a community was actively differentiated, avoided or targeted in an attempt to renegotiate alignments and establish clear connections compatible with constituent community agendas, values and identity. Understanding alignments is thus an important aspect of RCD. The role of alignments for a new RCD community is discussed in 7:3.

7: 2.3 Symbolic expression

Cohen (1989) argues meaning and boundaries are expressed symbolically in daily activities or rituals, as well as through discourse. He describes that this symbolic expression constructs community. Thus community is a dynamic construct, apparent in its symbolic expression. Meaning, values and identity of the rural community and associated constituent communities, including RCD communities, were expressed symbolically in language, physical infrastructure or actions and were part of the expression of boundary processes across the range of communities. Throughout the data, symbolic expression is seen both as an outcome of the process of establishing community and as a tool in the process, negotiating boundaries and developing identity in the expression of values and agendas.

Symbolic expression of community frequently occurred as a demonstration or acknowledgement of one community's difference to another. This was particularly so when people were visiting another community, where there was a sharing of the experience of one community with another. In this

manner and further supporting existing literature (see Cohen, 1989; Nowell, et al., 2006), community members were able to express to other communities the significance, identity and meaning in belonging to that community. For example, the symbolic significance of geographic boundaries was well illustrated where a physical structure had been created as marking the 'gateway' to symbolise leaving the outside world behind and entering the rural community (5: 2.1.1). The consideration given to ensuring that gateways accurately reflected the sense of community identity, and the potential need to change from previous structures to something more symbolic of the current community, demonstrated the continued desire to symbolically express the community identity. It also indicates the dynamic nature of community and thus the coinciding symbols. The expression reveals a boundary process of differentiation, very deliberately creating an identifiable boundary to the rural community. Such a visible expression of boundaries and identity also reinforced a strong sense of rural community identity as discussed in 7: 1.1.

While these expressions were chosen and constructed to represent the community identity, other landmarks were also discussed as symbolising the boundary of difference between communities. Waterways in particular were seen as a boundary between different and often conflicting attitudes and beliefs, even where members of these communities shared amenities and business infrastructure (5: 1.1 & 5:2.1.1). This endowing of meaning in landmarks is acknowledged in community development literature as the underlying process that converts a space into place in the concept of a community of place (Cheers, et al., 2007).

Participants also expressed the symbolic and practical importance of the "*main street*" as a focal point and central meeting place for the rural community. They consciously sought to create focal points around which to centralise the township activities, so to foster a common connection and sense of community (5: 2.1.1). In this manner "*the main street*" both symbolised and facilitated community identity, and was part of the rural community boundary processes.

Similarly, the language used to describe the rural community was symbolic of the experience of living within these communities (5: 2.1.1). Participants used phrases such as “*being at the end of the earth*” to describe their communities, representing the experience of isolation and limited resourcing. The use of such discourse and thus joint recognition by both members and non-members, suggests the discourse was an important aspect of community boundary processes. This language can be understood as part of the community narratives described in the literature as expressing the identity, values and attitudes of a community and contributing to distinguishing it from other communities (Cheers, et al., 2003; Taylor, et al., 2008). While the study of discourses is an area too large to engage in the current research, its interactive role in boundary processes through symbolic expression is apparent and therefore acknowledged.

The importance of maintaining a ‘historical memory’ within the rural communities also found expression symbolically (5: 2.1.2) and was linked with community narratives. Where families had lived in the rural community for generations, it was acknowledged in streets being named after these families and elderly members opening new facilities. This was associated with the sense of rural community identity as it exists over time, being symbols which provide a connection to the stories of events and experiences of the past, and are thus part of the role of community narratives described in rural community literature as heritage narratives (Bridger, 1997; Cheers, et al., 2007).

Symbolic expression was also used within alignment boundary processes as seen in ritualising the connecting of one community with another, whilst at the same time differentiating the identity of the communities (5: 2.1.2). The act of sharing a meal with non-members was a symbolic ritual likened to the Christian ceremony of breaking bread. In this way it symbolised the connectedness and trust between two identified communities, at the same time differentiating two communities and welcoming the alignment. The ritual was part of building mutually supportive community relationships.

Members of constituent communities also developed symbolic expressions of their belonging through physical representations such as sculptures, art, uniforms and signage, to portray the essence, significance or identity in belonging to a constituent community. Participants recounted the pride and passion that members expressed, and were conscious of a sense of identity and belonging represented by these symbols, describing that they “*bring in a that strong sense of personal identity and sense of belonging*” (5: 2.1.2).

Language was frequently part of symbolically expressing constituent community boundaries. Throughout the data, there were commonly used phrases that were pictorial or metaphoric representations of aspects of identity associated with belonging to various communities. Phrases such as “*the chardonnay set*”, “*low lifes*” or “*new settlers*” symbolised the values, perspectives and life style of the associated communities. Likewise, boundaries were also apparent when the language used to converse within a constituent community membership involved terms which were not familiar to non-members. This again suggests a role within community boundary processes of discourses. However, as indicated previously, this will not be explored in the current study beyond acknowledging the connection to the role of community narratives as presented in the work of Cheers and colleagues (Cheers, et al., 2007; Taylor, et al., 2008).

Questions around symbolic expression of community were not asked within the research interviews and thus the findings regarding this were offered in the general description of communities and RCD processes. As such the research data reflects a small sample of the boundary symbols present in the communities. Further examples may have been found if the research method included longer observation and questions designed to identify patterns and ritual in community. Yet their presence suggests that identifying and understanding the significant expressions of identity may facilitate RCD processes. For example, understanding discourse and language associated with various constituent communities supports clear communication, or recognising the significance in sharing a meal enables respect and considered response to such actions.

In summary, RCD occurred amongst the interaction of these boundary processes of agendas, alignments and symbolic expression and thus those involved engage these processes whether consciously or not. The next section explores how RCD interacts with these dynamic processes as they shape the fabric of the community.

7: 3. Rural Community Development Boundary Processes and the Community Fabric

It has long been acknowledged that the negotiations between and across the boundaries of the multiple communities with which we engage, are part of daily life (Barbesino, 1997). In light of the boundary processes in the preceding discussion, RCD would involve understanding how these processes relate to the emerging RCD constituent cause community and the existing constituent communities. It would further entail understanding how they contribute to shaping the fabric of the rural community. The modelling developed in this thesis provides a path for understanding the rural community processes and dynamics as they interact with RCD.



Figure 3: RCD community processes model

As depicted in Figure 3 and previously discussed, it is proposed that the multiplicity of communities within the rural communities were constituent communities of the rural community process. Rural and constituent communities were subject to the same boundary processes as they co-existed, fluidly shaping and making the fabric of the rural community. When considering the aetiology of the constituent communities, three types were identified: feature, interest and cause based. Each type had a different function and correspondingly, different degrees of interpersonal interaction and structure within the rural community. Understanding constituent communities in this manner drew attention to the processes of RCD within the fabric of the rural community as being the establishment of a constituent cause community amongst the existing constituent communities and

within rural community processes. The implementation of the RCD projects thus involved the establishment of a new RCD community, with the common vision, interest, beliefs and values that all form a collective identity and a repository of meaning for those involved.

As new constituent communities of cause, the RCD communities were subject to the same boundary processes of differentiation, agendas, alignment and symbolic expression, as other communities. In the same manner that boundaries can be imposed externally through policy (Brent, 1997; Shaw, 2008), the boundaries negotiated within the RCD community also affected the rural community fabric. Further, there was the interaction of these internal community meanings and influences with the external influences of each project (eg political), all of which impacted rural community boundaries and meaning.

The process of negotiating the existence of the new RCD community involved traversing and renegotiating boundaries which in turn changed the fabric of the rural community; whether new boundaries were formed, existing boundaries emphasised, shifted or merged. These in turn have potential implications for individuals and the construction and reconstruction of the fabric of the community. Participants considered these boundary processes to be significant when implementing RCD projects, flagging the need to take “*politics*”, “*alliances*”, and the community dynamics into account in determining the processes for implementation. As indicated by Bauman (2001), boundaries will be ‘threatened’ and changed through communication across the boundaries. As RCD involves communication across boundaries, it follows then that in addition to the impact in terms of project objectives, the related boundary processes can also be expected to have had an impact on the meanings and identities drawn from and attributed to rural community life, as well as the overall fabric of the rural communities.

That RCD involved boundary processes amongst constituent communities brought attention to two further processes which interacted with boundary differentiation, agendas, alignments and symbolic expression. These processes of community ownership and support were apparent in relation to the

RCD communities as cause communities amongst the other constituent communities and within the rural community as depicted in Figure 3. They were distinct processes with different roles in RCD, where ownership entailed embracing the project concept and associated tasks, and support facilitated RCD through reducing or removing resistance to the project concept. The RCD communities consisted of leaders who held community ownership, and other members drawn from the sphere of community support. Community ownership and support, and the previously presented boundary processes are discussed in the following, in the manner that they were apparent through the establishment and ongoing management of an RCD community as collective identity.

7: 3.1 Community ownership and support

Community ownership and support are common themes within community development practice and principles (Cavaye, 2001, 2005; Cheers & Hall, 1994; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Nowell, et al., 2006; Ritchie, et al., 2004). Literature tends to focus on the importance of engaging ownership and support in ensuring success of RCD projects, and as a principle related to social justice, empowerment and self-determination. The findings of this research add detail which distinguishes community ownership and support as separate concepts with different roles important in the boundary processes of RCD communities.

The processes of community ownership and support presented in the findings relate to the workings of RCD communities and were apparent for other cause constituent communities. These processes were not observed across feature and interest based communities. However this may be a result of the research focusing upon RCD activities during data collection. It is conceivable that the rural community as a feature community involves ownership and support processes and likewise that interest communities with frequent activity would similarly experience these processes. Further research would be needed to identify the relevance of the current modelling beyond cause community processes.

With regard to RCD and constituent community boundary processes, community ownership was strongly apparent emerging through an 'us - them' perspective on events and activities, interwoven with leadership processes. Ownership was both an outcome of community activity and a process enabling community activity, and was demonstrated through people engaging the project concept as well as the related tasks. It was instigated by a small core of leaders described as "*movers and shakers*" or "*local champions*" who took an active interest in attaining positive gains within their rural community, had broad networks and to whom maintaining the project momentum then fell (6:2). In this role, these leaders with ownership of an RCD project concept were the core members of an RCD community, as depicted in Figure 3.

Ownership of the project concept was built on a strong sense of connection with the rural community which was founded in peoples' inherent need for purpose and meaning in life and similarly, to define and express identity through belonging (6:2 & 6:4). It was further facilitated by an identified need for the project within the rural community. Concept ownership involved embracing the identity, meaning and underpinning values found through the RCD community and expressed in the project agenda (6: 4).

Ownership and responsibility of tasks were connected to having a local voice and control, which in turn was also founded in a sense of rural community identity (6: 4). Leaders' passion for the rural community led to a desire for control over RCD activities and decision making (6: 2). This relates to research on community attachment which has found that higher levels of community attachment result in increased levels of community action (Theodori, 2004). Ensuring local control also facilitated ownership. Where tasks were prescribed by external players and there was a lack of local power to define, action and control the project purpose and activities, local activity stopped when the external action stopped (6: 4). In this manner, the desire for local control was both an outcome of community ownership as well as a tool for engaging community ownership.

Ownership and the pursuant embracing of responsibility for RCD community tasks required members' commitment of time, energy and resources. This was willingly given and maintained while satisfaction was found in engaging with others, being able to contribute to the process, and achieving together; that is, where purpose and meaning was provided within the community process. Ownership was more than completing tasks, requiring engagement in "*the warm and fuzzies*" of human interaction and the collective experience of achieving a shared vision. These further reinforced members' contribution and commitment. However, high input had an individual cost over time, with members at times reaching the conclusion that they had completed their contribution. Thus ongoing membership recruitment was required to maintain community momentum. The level of commitment required also resulted in a core few being the mainstay of an RCD community and project. These were those understood by participants and described in community development literature to be community leaders. They were in there for the "*long haul*", and maintained activities while others waxed and waned. (6: 2 & 6:4.1)

These core members saw it was important to manage the extent to which they held control or encouraged other members to determine community direction, activities and processes. RCD community leaders juggled exerting control to maintain the momentum towards goals, and releasing control and power so more community members could embrace ownership, and in turn be encouraged by contributing to the process of shaping the RCD community, determining the purpose and direction. (6: 4.1)

Where control over the community processes and activity was managed tightly by the core leaders, there was less or no room for a broader membership to shape and determine the constituent community identity. This also limited the negotiation of boundaries with other constituent communities, and the project goals took longer to achieve. However, goals were rapidly achieved where core members/leaders actively managed community ownership. This involved presenting the RCD community in a manner that encouraged membership, and then managing the community's

internal processes to further encourage ownership of both the concept and responsibility for tasks. Both were facilitated by a genuine respect amongst leaders and members, of members' contributions. Where within the RCD community environment, members had a clear knowledge of the significance of their contribution to the RCD community and their role in the associated activities, this reinforced a sense of belonging, purpose and achievement and appeared to balance the personal cost of the extensive commitment of individual time and resources. (6: 4.2) This points to the relevance within ownership processes of the literature regarding community and identity and meaning as discussed in 3:1 and 7:1. In turn, these dynamics highlight the role of community processes in project implementation, particularly as an RCD constituent community.

"Support from the community" was another process interacting with the RCD community activities that was described by participants. As a concept compared with community ownership, community support encompassed a broader sample from and at times beyond, the rural community. Whereas ownership entailed membership of the RCD community and embracing both the project concept and responsibility for tasks, community support differed in that while it may involve membership (identifying and being identified as belonging to the RCD community), it also occurred through alignments and did not necessitate continued responsibility. Participants with ownership of a project described community support as something they needed to engage or access (6: 5).

Boundary negotiations were a large component of community support processes in that support involved building membership and/or alignments which could facilitate actions needed for the RCD cause. Action from the community support sphere, while sometimes engaged, was not essential in characterising support. The key role of community support in the projects was about facilitating a supportive environment through reducing or removing resistance for the project within the rural community, so that *"you haven't got the people really against you"*. Members holding ownership engaged support from other RCD community members or through alignments to complete a specific task, but the responsibility for the project momentum remained within the sphere of ownership.

The interaction of community support and ownership processes was seen where RCD community members with ownership simultaneously managed and were affected by the experience of support. Community support was managed through boundary negotiation processes by presenting the RCD community agenda and building alignments through engagement and education within the rural community. These occurred through surveys, meetings, a range of marketing strategies and developing network relationships. Such activities were underscored by the values of the RCD community, enabling a focus on the purpose and (where possible) common, non-contentious values with the aim of “*getting belief*” and “*support for the concept*” such that people “*think it is a good idea*” (6: 5.1). That ownership was difficult to engage where there was a history of depressed rural community and previous failure (6: 4.1) pertains to community support processes: the previous poor conditions and failures built resistance through the expectation of continued failure, rather than community support for a new effort that would bring change. Experiencing community support was both rewarding and motivating for core members, contributing to the momentum within the RCD community. Accordingly, where community support was actively managed there was greater momentum within the RCD community, again facilitating the rapid achievement of goals (6: 5.2).

The preceding modelling of community ownership and support relates to Cavaye’s (2003) model layering ‘participation by degree’. He argues that while engaging core active participants is important (described in the current model as ownership processes), better management of alternative participation options (described here as support processes) might work to address the issue of fatigue amongst once active rural community members. The ownership and support modelling strengthens the value of Cavaye’s approach. Support without high levels of action was an important component of RCD processes. It provided an environment of reduced resistance and enabled the RCD community to negotiate community boundaries to develop and present a strong agenda and identity, and build alignments to further support progressing project activities. The relationship between active management of community support and the achievement of RCD goals

similarly supports the importance of community engagement beyond the core members with ownership.

Community participation literature from community psychology differentiates between instrumental and expressive participation (Mannarini & Fedi, 2009). Considering these within RCD community processes, instrumental participation overlaps with the concept of ownership in having a goal orientation. Literature on instrumental participation which describes the sensitivity to efficacy also parallels some leaders' descriptions of needing a supportive environment with evidence of the capacity to reach the goals, for them to continue within an RCD community. Expressive participation would encompass both RCD core members with ownership and members drawn from the sphere of community support, as the focus is on the emotional connection of membership as a space to express belonging and common values. In this manner, expressive participation is associated with engaging in the RCD community, gaining meaning through membership.

The relationship between participation and the processes of community ownership and support are highly complex. The current research observed community action and ownership to be associated with participants' expression of passion for and emotional connection to their rural community, a dynamic supported by other community development research finding a positive correlation between community attachment and community action (Theodori, 2004). However, research regarding the relationship between participation and peoples' sense of community suggests this is only one part of the relationship. A low sense of community is not always associated with low participation, particularly where there is an awareness of problems and needs within a community (Mannarini & Fedi, 2009). Applied to the current study, it is possible that community ownership within RCD community processes could also be associated with dissatisfaction or perceived injustice in the distribution or availability of resources. However, like previous research (Theodori, 2004), a relationship between community satisfaction and community action was not identified in the current study.

The current thesis offers a new perspective on participation in viewing it in relation to community boundary processes within RCD and through beginning to discriminate the different functions and roles of community ownership and support. However, further research would be needed to determine how these relate to participation, and the expanse of participation literature.

7: 3.2 Establishing a collective identity

Community leaders instigated RCD, building on interests they believed would benefit the rural community. These ideas were founded in a strong value base of normative expectations and ideals of the rural community and were aligned with the principles found in community development literature. For the RCD activity to be realised, a constituent community was established around the values which were actioned as an agenda. The processes of establishing the RCD community involved founding members negotiating existing constituent communities' boundaries with the associated agendas, alignments and non-alignments, and creating a new collective identity with a core active membership of ownership and a broader sphere of community support. The RCD community identity which was based in the initial values and agenda, was further developed through other boundary processes of differentiation, alignments and symbolic expression, resulting in a new constituent community as the foundation and reference point for the RCD activity.

7: 3.2.1 Values

Participants described the passion and determination that leaders brought and which contributed to the founding values of fledgling RCD communities, referring to both personality attributes and the importance of a supportive environment which involved a shared vision and work load. These findings reflect previous writings on the role of leaders and passion in community (Cavaye, 2001, 2005; Kenny, 2006), but further offer the relevance of values and the boundary processes of an RCD project as an establishing constituent community.

Some of the values found within the RCD communities were expressed as agendas which were important in boundary processes differentiating one community identity from another. These were

associated with the cause or purpose of the community as discussed in 7:1.2. Other values were not necessarily motivating agendas, but were important in the community identity in that they set the approach to living and interacting as the constituent community (6: 3.2). These values common within the RCD communities were clearly expressed by participants as not only setting the standard for how they interacted as a community, but also as stimulating continued engagement in the RCD community and thus being able to achieve their goals.

Being able to *“have a go”* was valued within the RCD communities, emphasising that regardless of previous experience, all rural community members could participate in RCD. It was considered important to work as a team, focusing on the collective efforts and achievement for community rather than individual recognition and gain. A team approach was also described as being inclusive and respectful of each person’s contribution, reinforcing the opportunity to *“have a go”*. Similarly, an attitude that together they could *“make it happen”* was described as key in being able to push constituent community boundaries and *“break the rules”* to achieve benefits for the rural community.

Being able to maintain local control was highly valued across the RCD communities and considered an important aspect of maintaining engagement which was in turn seen to increase the capacity of communities to respond to challenges. Having democratic decision making processes was also raised across the participating projects as important. Within one RCD community, the active practice of it was believed to have contributed to the continued engagement within the RCD community around community processes and activities (6: 3.2). Conversely, within another community the lack of democratic processes was considered to have reduced engagement (6: 3.4.1). Likewise social interaction as an RCD community and the value of the *“warm and fuzzies”* was seen as integral to cause community workings and also affecting engagement in ultimately achieving project objectives. Without mixing as an RCD community, objectives were either not achieved, or were achieved more slowly. It appears that creating the new community of cause was not just

through determining the values and meaning with which people could identify, but also as previously discussed, in creating something to “*be part of*” and around which to gather with other people.

RCD community common values and agendas	Associated practice principles
<i>“have a go” – RCD is for anyone/everyone, not just a select few</i>	Participation
Team approach – <i>community & collective focus ahead of individual recognition and gain</i>	Solidarity Collective action Participation
Democratic decision making	
RCD community social interaction	Collective action Participation
Local control	Agency Community control Bottom-up Self determination Community driven
<i>“Business like” approach – clear agenda and goals with clear tasks and the steps for achieving these</i>	Project management good practice principles
Keeping broad community engagement – <i>building sustainability</i>	Community ownership Sustainability
Mutual benefit – <i>for shared gain and building sustainability</i>	Sustainability Felt needs
Support the ‘common people’ – <i>wellbeing for disadvantaged</i>	Accountability addressing disadvantage
Youth and leadership development	Empowerment Mobilisation Sustainability

Table 5: Relationship of 'RCD community' values & agendas to community development principles

These and other underpinning values that were observed as common across the RCD communities are summarised in Table 5, alongside the related value base, principles and ideals found in community development literature and practitioner resources (eg Brawley, 1994; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006). Comparing this table with the principles table (Table 2) in 3:3.1 highlights the influence of such principles throughout RCD communities. Further, the commonality across the RCD communities and with community development principles suggests these may also be part of boundary processes in differentiating RCD cause communities from other constituent communities. However it is not possible to determine this from the research data, so it would need further research to gauge.

The current research findings support previous community research in acknowledging the important role of having a sense of shared values within community (Cohen, 1989; Reisch & Guyet, 2007). In the same way that Reisch and Guyet (2007) describe the establishment of joint values as crucial in building cooperative action, RCD communities where members quickly established community values were able to present an identity in the pursuant boundary negotiations amongst other constituent communities. In this manner they progressed the project activity more rapidly than where establishing a collective identity was avoided. As Cohen (1989) discussed, identifying the values shared within a community creates a foundation where differences within a community exist but are no longer the focus, and instead a foundation is found for solidarity. This reflects the concept of community expressed in Bhattacharyya's (2004) solidarity, and embraces the difference within community as per Brent's (1997) unicity.

Thus, where the RCD community agenda became the rhetoric of the new constituent community, and clearly stated and reinforced the values and meaning of the new community, project goals were rapidly achieved. Conversely, where determining joint values and differentiation through boundary processes was avoided or missed, even though the project tasks were the same, there were struggles in gaining a clear identity around which a new RCD community could galvanise. By presenting a clear RCD community identity, people were able to determine whether these matched their own values when considering their relationship with the community. This enabled members to focus on pursuing the RCD community cause without the need at the time to continue to determine identity through debating values, and negotiating boundaries to determine difference. People, who were considering the possibility of membership, could choose to not engage if they were uncomfortable with a strongly established community identity, rather than remain and try to continue boundary negotiations.

7: 3.2.2 Early alignments

Participants identified the importance of having information regarding existing and needed alignments, to be able to navigate them appropriately and thus inform the negotiation of boundaries in the early stages of establishing an RCD community (5: 2.3 & 6: 3). Building early alignments was possible where the values and collective identity had been quickly established, thus providing a foundation for determining needed alignments or non-alignments for the project's success. The values and traits brought by leaders were seen to inform the values and agenda of the RCD communities. Leaders were also important for the potential connections and alignments associated with their multiple memberships.

The constituent communities identified in the findings as important for early alignments particularly related to feature and other cause communities. Even though feature-based constituent communities did not necessary involve structure or member interaction, their relationship within the rural community played an important role in association with RCD boundary processes.

Alignment processes which were common across the RCD communities included those related to the length of connection in the rural community, age, SES and conservation. These alignment processes played a role in facilitating a supportive environment through reducing resistance, and accessing skills and resources. While these were common alignment negotiations, it is conceivable that important community alignments would vary in different rural communities and for different projects and might also include interest based communities.

While all RCD communities sought to align themselves with both the new-comer and long-timer communities, one RCD community where the initial membership was predominantly new-comers, particularly invited long-timers to join as RCD community members (6: 3.1.1a). This was considered important so to bring "*a knowledge of the community*" which appeared to relate to having experienced the history within the rural community, thus bringing an understanding of the people, skills and relationship dynamics which the RCD community would need to negotiate in implementing

the project. Likewise, in ensuring a balance of new-comer and long-timer members, it was reasoned that the RCD community would have greater validity throughout the rural community as being seen to know the rural community and its needs. It was felt that this encouraged further alignments within the rural community and thus reduced resistance to progressing project activities.

Within the early boundary processes, tensions arose in relation to building alignments across SES boundaries (6: 3.1.1d). RCD communities sought the skills, experience and financial support within higher SES, and thus built alignments with these communities. However, in determining how these alignments were expressed, tension was conveyed that RCD community energies were meant to be directed to supporting disadvantaged rather than “*middle class*”. Both alignments were important to access skills and resources, build broad community engagement, and in maintaining integrity regarding community development principles. Thus balancing alignment commitments across SES boundaries was needed within the RCD community to facilitate achieving project goals.

The RCD community relationship or perceived relationship with conservation and structural development cause communities were two boundary processes where how they were negotiated during the establishment of the RCD community had significant impact on the progress of project implementation (5: 2.3.4 & 6: 3.1.2). Where emerging RCD communities were perceived to be aligned with either the Green or forestry communities due to the founding membership, the RCD communities struggled to gain support as people perceived the associated value-base to respectively be in conflict with these opposing communities. In these circumstances, RCD communities grew and progressed their projects more rapidly where non-alignment processes were put in place early.

Non-alignment was conveyed through more strongly promoting the RCD community identity with regard to the core uncontentious values and clear goals of the RCD community agenda. As part of voicing these, participants also highlighted the differences between the RCD community and the respective communities, and even changed the official leadership within the RCD community so that

perceived alignments were less likely. Such boundary processes again highlight the relationship between alignment and values and agendas as discussed in 7:2.2.

There was awareness within each of the RCD communities, of building alignments across all age demographics (6: 3.1.1c). One community in particular, *“from day one ... consciously tried to include all age groups”*. Even with deliberately targeting the various age based communities, participants described not attracting *“young people”* in their initial membership and thus saw a continued need to engage youth within their RCD communities. These challenges reflect the lower number of young people across rural community population demographics, and were also described as relating to the busy lifestyles of young families juggling income, family and recreational commitments.

Other alignment processes found in individual sites included the distinction between local and non-local, and a part-time resident community (6: 3.1.1b&e). In both cases participants acknowledged the boundary but then engaged people on both sides, recognising the contribution possible within the RCD community. Although recognised, these boundaries were then down-played in the processes of aligning people with and/or bringing them into the RCD community, apparent in statements such as *“we’re all new to it. So that sort of local-nonlocal bullshit just doesn’t exist”*.

Alignment boundary processes in the RCD communities were a fine balance of acknowledging the differences and boundaries to ensure broad membership and/or support for the project, while simultaneously focusing on the common link which diminished the boundary’s visibility during RCD community interaction. The common link was the values, and agendas underpinning the RCD community identity.

Projects where a strong RCD community identity was quickly established based on clear goals and values (agendas), then actively recruited members who would bring new alignments that could later support the project activities. Recruitment to build early alignments was pivotal in building relationships for ongoing RCD community membership as well as general community support. This involved identifying the other constituent communities in the rural community, determining which

were important for the RCD community's success, and then recruiting new members from within the sphere of ownership in other cause constituent communities, or who were well networked within the feature communities; - leaders recruiting leaders.

Throughout the process of building alignments in this manner, the identities and values associated with each of the existing constituent communities were acknowledged and validated from the outset within the new RCD community. Each member and the alignment they represented had something to bring to the process of achieving the project. Alignment via multiple membership recruitment for establishing RCD communities thus involved the negotiating of the differing values and agendas brought by each alignment, to then reach a common set of values associated with the agenda of the new community. This needed to occur without negating other community membership, so to maintain the alignments. In one RCD community it was particularly achieved through the acknowledgement and respect of each individual's roles, alignments and contribution, and through ensuring the focus remained on the project purpose and the values common across the various agendas. Memorandums of Understanding were another example of the acknowledgement through being a symbolic representation of boundaries, signifying different community identities and alignment.

Although not easily found in community development journals, the concept of boundary crossers or boundary spanners has been a topic of exploration in association with community leadership across a range of disciplines including sociology, education, public administration and psychology literature (Kilpatrick, Auckland, Johns, & Whelan, 2008; Peirce & Johnson, 1997; Williams, 2002). Boundary crossers are described within the literature as people who move across disciplinary, organisational, professional or community domains, who understand the values cultures and language, and have the trust of those involved (Kilpatrick, et al., 2008; Peirce & Johnson, 1997; Williams, 2002). In building early alignments when establishing the RCD community, leaders were moving across a number of constituent community boundaries. As such, literature relating to boundary spanners or

boundary crossers may have relevance to establishing an RCD community. Certainly the traits and roles described by participant regarding a 'community activity personality' of members involved in many constituent communities and particularly cause communities (6: 2) resemble those described in the boundary crosser literature (Kilpatrick, et al., 2008; Williams, 2002). Likewise, the role of agendas and alignment may have relevance in further understanding boundary crossing processes, but an in-depth consideration is beyond the scope of the current study.

With early alignments in place, the new RCD communities continued the process of boundary differentiation, enabling a clear collective identity around which further community support and ownership could then be built. While differentiation occurred whenever members of constituent communities met, boundaries were also actively constructed and demonstrated between the new RCD communities and the rural community, as well as between RCD communities and their funding source (6: 3.3). The construction of these boundaries appeared to be about the need for RCD communities to demonstrate their difference to and consequently their role in benefiting the rural community, thus facilitating community support. Conversely participants also demonstrated their alignment with and capacity as a local voice for the rural community, by simultaneously delineating the RCD community as an entity separate from their funding sources, thus sustaining and encouraging community ownership. For RCD community members, this involved juggling their agenda for local control and a local voice in comparison to the agendas of the funding source.

The boundary processes for the RCD communities in relation to the rural community and the funding source were a balancing act of maintaining strong alignment with funding sources for the benefits of resourcing, and yet demonstrating independent values and identity seeking local control of the approach to and timing of project activities. Local RCD community members negotiated the power balance in the boundary process by at times addressing or avoiding conflict in juggling what they determined was in the best interests of the RCD community and the rural community. Funders' agendas and power were formally articulated to RCD communities through contracts, policy and

guideline documents as well as re-iterated in meetings and reviews. However, RCD community agendas while clear to members were not necessarily clear to funders and nor were there formal processes in place for this to occur. Thus balancing the differing agendas and power in these boundary processes fell to the RCD communities to initiate. One RCD community claimed power in the processes through seeking to establish a sense of equality in their dealings with funding source members *“diplomatically telling them they could make their suggestions, but we were going to do it our way.”* The ensuing process was one of presenting their agendas and negotiating the differences up front. Another RCD community negotiated power through creatively applying their own agendas to the process, then arguing the case in reporting processes after the event. These boundary tensions flag the significant role of power in community development literature and are examples of participants juggling the bottom-up and top-down agendas described in the literature review (3:3.1) and 7:2.1.

Creating awareness across all sectors of a rural community of the needs and associated opportunities and project activities, is not a new concept in community development implementation. Indeed, many approaches describe this process as part of the first tasks (Kaufman, 1959; Kenny, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2008; Wilkinson 1970). However the current study points to the importance of understanding the boundary processes involved, and particularly that it is the awareness of the collective identity of the RCD community that also needs to be managed in the interactions with the constituent communities.

The management of early alignment boundary processes thus appeared to be important in whether or not the RCD communities became established with a clear collective identity within the rural community. Perceived or real alignments associated with contentious values affected the RCD communities' capacity to progress project activities. Where early alignments were actively managed this involved identifying existing constituent communities and their potential role in supporting or negatively impacting RCD community objectives. Leaders from other communities were recruited to

the RCD community where there were common values and a potential positive contribution. To build and maintain these alignments there was a need to acknowledge the identities and agendas associated with the alignment. This was a process of simultaneously recognising the contribution brought by the difference while focusing on the shared values and goals. These processes highlighted the role of power in managing boundaries, as well as the role of boundary crossers in RCD.

Values and agendas were core to the collective identity of RCD communities, and developing an RCD community appeared core to the implementation process. By first negotiating and clearly identifying the values and agendas around which the RCD community was established, leaders enabled the capacity to build alignments and non-alignments. While alignments were needed to access resources and support, people's willingness to be involved hinged on compatible values associated with their individual and collective identities accompanying their membership in other constituent communities. Project goals were more rapidly attained when the RCD communities clearly projected a collective identity and establishing early alignments and non-alignments were actively pursued. At the extreme end, where no community identity was actively developed and stakeholders of a project remained separate representatives of their existing communities, the project 'died' when the leader bringing the stakeholders together left. Despite there being clear goals and tasks the project did not continue where there was no collective identity of an RCD community made of core members with ownership, and additional community support. The management within RCD community of multiple identities was also part of these early boundary processes, simultaneously acknowledging difference while maintaining a focus on the shared values and goals. (6: 3.6)

7: 3.3 Ongoing boundary processes within RCD communities

The preceding section considered boundary processes involved in first setting -up RCD communities, but maintaining RCD communities also involved ongoing boundary processes, as members moved amongst other constituent communities as well as juggling the effects of multiple memberships. That boundary processes are a continual component within the expression and identification of community is accepted within community and community development literature (Brent, 1997; Cohen, 1989; Dixon, et al., 2003a). This section discusses boundary processes in the ongoing maintenance of an RCD community, their effect upon relationships amongst members, and in turn RCD community activities and the fabric of the rural community.

Where projects encompassed a regional view of rural community, RCD communities sought to be representative across the smaller rural townships involved (6: 1). Likewise, where projects were to benefit the “*whole*” rural community, there was particularly a felt need to ensure RCD communities were representative of the constituent communities across the rural community. This endeavour to be representative reflects the influence of community development principles and values associated with social justice (Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006). Representation was achieved through alignments and used within community ownership and support as previously described. In this manner, representation was an important aspect of boundary interaction with all constituent community types.

Four feature constituent community boundaries were of particular importance in the ongoing maintenance of the RCD community throughout the life of the project. These were associated with the length of connection with the rural community, age, SES and employment status. Boundary processes relating to the length of connection with the rural community, affected relationships within the RCD community in a similar manner as within the rural community (5: 1.2.1a & 6:3.4.1). In managing alignments for long-timer and new-comer communities’ representation, RCD community members negotiated their boundary, values and collective identity through balancing

the role of, and respect for, both historical memory and new expectations. This balancing simultaneously affected internal community relationships and dynamics.

As described in 7: 1.2 and 7: 2.3, long-timers' experience of the history associated with the rural community was a source of an historical memory regarding the rural community. Long-timers were considered to know the rural community and therefore be important in gaining an understanding of the rural community dynamics and needs relevant for RCD community processes. In this sense, long-timers were provided a right to determine what was good for the rural community. These boundary dynamics resemble Bridger's (1997) identification of the role of heritage narratives as being selective historical representations that form the basis upon which the meaning of current activities can be understood and thus inform future decisions. Within one RCD community, long-timers in a gesture of goodwill used various methods to share knowledge of the rural community concerns, issues and history. However, these actions highlighted and symbolised difference rather than dissolved the boundary. Knowledge of the past alone was insufficient for new-comers to cross the boundary; - there was significance in having had some experience of the past. This significance in experiencing rural community history was also seen to contribute to the fluidity of the long-timer/newcomer boundary.

While long-timer boundary processes involved unofficial authority regarding rural community needs, in the current study, new-comers were more likely to seek change within the rural community including instigating or engaging in RCD activity. This is in contrast with other findings regarding rural communities where long-time residents were more likely than their counterparts to engage in one or more actions at the community level (Theodori, 2004). However the differences within the current study may be a reflection of the sea/tree change dynamic, where many new-comers had a strong sense of agency having recently chosen their locale, as well as their different life experiences and expectations from professional careers and previous access to city facilities.

Similarly, new-comers had different expectations of RCD community processes, particularly anticipating processes that would ameliorate personal risk and ensure democratic decisions within the RCD community. Managing the long-timer/new-comer boundary was important within the RCD communities to continue to maintain alignments and continuing community ownership and support from across both constituent communities. When these were not actively addressed or respected, members were lost and the projects took longer to progress.

Negotiating SES boundaries was similarly important in RCD community internal dynamics, external alignments and the associated effect upon community ownership and support (5: 1.2.1e & 6: 3.4.1b). Participants described acknowledging yet managing these differences through the use and acceptance of humorous “*sling offs*” regarding associated yet unspoken dress-codes of different SES participants. However, as previously described, tensions also arose around perceived value differences, which therefore needed to be carefully straddled, for the RCD community to maintain these alignments across the rural community.

In addition to representation, age and employment status boundary processes were essential in the RCD communities’ capacity to sustain activities (6: 3.4.1b&c). Having a balance from youth, working and retired communities facilitated skill development towards the communities’ futures as well as ensuring there were members with the time to immediately progress RCD community activities. Throughout the life of the RCD communities, different approaches were considered and explored to engage people across these boundaries particularly with regard to youth. In some examples special roles were created for long-timers and youth in an attempt to reduce barriers to engagement.

Negotiating these feature community boundaries through acknowledging and accommodating the differing agendas was thus unavoidable for continuing RCD communities. Given the literature on boundaries and accommodating difference within community (Cohen, 1982a; Cohen, 1989), it is not surprising that this was achieved where the strongest focus within the RCD community remained on the common values and purpose reflected in the collective identity of the RCD community. With

interest and cause communities, ongoing RCD community boundary processes involving the expression of agendas, alignments and multiple membership additionally resulted in needing to manage conflicts of interest within the RCD community, as well as the consequences and tensions of difference (6: 3.4.2).

As with the early alignment processes ongoing alignments perceived or real suggested acceptance of the associate values within the RCD community. In particular, antagonism associated with developers and conservation boundaries even when related to events long gone, remained strong within the rural community through the historical memory of long-timers experiences and the resultant heritage narratives. These were thus a continued process of boundary management for RCD communities. Where apparent alignments were detrimental to community support, active engagement in boundary processes of non-alignment activities continued to be used to reduce resistance and facilitate community support process (6: 3.1.2 & 6:3.4.3).

In this manner, alignment and non-alignment across constituent community boundaries inherently involved identity management for RCD community members, both as individuals and collectively. As discussed in 7: 2.2, similar identity and boundary processes have been described in managing conflict in other community studies (Larsen, 1982), but not with regard to RCD community processes.

The concept of community being given symbolic expression has long existed in community studies, particularly in the area of anthropology in works such as Cohen's (Cohen, 1989). The role of symbolic expression within RCD does not appear to have received similar attention within community development literature. Within the ongoing boundary processes of RCD communities, symbolic expressions of their community were seen through the development of agreed language, actions and documents. These impressed upon participants a sense of collective identity and purpose as well as creating structure in community functioning. Such findings suggest that as with other communities, symbolic expression of community has a role within RCD communities in

conveying meaning for members (Cohen, 1989; Nowell, et al., 2006). However the current study has insufficient data to understand the extent or relative importance of this role in RCD processes.

In summary, the boundary processes highlighted within the rural communities through RCD activities, were also apparent for the RCD communities themselves both during their establishment and then ongoing. In light of the different management of boundary processes and the associated outcomes in each of the projects, it is apparent that stakeholders knowing and applying community development steps and tasks was insufficient alone to ensure the engagement and ongoing success of the RCD projects. A key aspect for the RCD activity was the establishment of an RCD constituent community. This included having the agenda, language and the values of the new community articulated to support the development of a collective identity around which the constituent community could be galvanised. Establishing an RCD community involved processes of community ownership and support. Ownership occurred through core RCD community members embracing the project concept with the associated values and meaning, and the responsibility of the project tasks. In comparison, community support encompassed a broader sample from and at times beyond, the rural community, did not necessitate continued responsibility, and occurred through engagement with the RCD community collective identity or through alignments. As a constituent cause community, the RCD community was involved in maintaining their collective identity and continued boundary processes of differentiation, agendas, alignments and symbolic expression.

7: 4. Community Development Frameworks and RCD Community Process Modelling.

The community processes and RCD modelling presented in this thesis does not exist nor need be interpreted in isolation from current approaches and frameworks in community research. The focus of the modelling is on the dynamics of RCD as it interacts with the community fabric and as interpreted through community boundary processes. Insight gained from this focus is

contextualised by existing community development knowledge and likewise, the model can contribute to existing models and knowledge.

As described in 3:3.2, the work of Cheers et al (Cheers, et al., 2003; Cheers & Luloff, 2001) set about to construct a framework to understand how people construct rural community. The initial foundation of this framework was drawn from Wilkinson's (1970a) consideration of community as a 'field' of social organisation, and the ensuing Community Interaction Theory (CIT). The proposed modelling similarly acknowledges the dynamic differentiating and integrated processes in community which Wilkinson sought to highlight by using the term 'field'. The observation of boundaries in the rural communities' dynamics highlighted processes of differentiation to be prominent in RCD and thus an important consideration in accounting the constant change within a community field. However, as the term social organisation can be suggestive of structure systems within community, the concept of the 'fabric of community' is chosen within the current research as highlighting the complexity and interwoven nature of the interaction and dynamics of community, particularly as seen in boundary processes.

The current modelling relates to CIT in that it highlights the boundary processes suggested by the components of locality, local society and social fields, and their relationship to the community field. However, the models diverge in that within CIT, community is not considered to exist unless there is interaction focused on the wellbeing of all involved; that is, where there is community field. Within the proposed community process model, the term community encompasses its broad use, including the boundaries appropriated even where there is little or no interaction. This reflects a difference in the use of terminology rather than necessarily being incompatible descriptions of community processes. Due to this difference in definition, from a field perspective, the boundary processes described would not be accepted as constituent community boundary processes, but those of social fields, and the activities within the local society.

Similarly, in the development of the community strength model (Cheers, et al., 2003) while developed with a multidisciplinary team, the framework for a community construct was purposed to be *“a genuine sociological concept, rather than an economic, psychological, or geographical one”* (p. 142). The community processes model offered here differs in that it has been based on multidisciplinary perspectives, including sociology, anthropology, and social and community psychology, and has looked to develop theory with relevance across these disciplines. This has enabled the inclusion of concepts such as feature communities.

Thus the community processes model can still be used in light of Cheers et al’s (Cheers, et al., 2007; Cheers, et al., 2003) community strength model. Cheers et al’s (2003) research demonstrated the need to understand how a strong active community field is produced. The community process model proposed here responds in providing details of the boundary processes underlying the RCD processes; modelling how the various constituents of the community fabric interacted in the process of RCD. These relate to providing an understanding of the boundary processes involved in the interactions of social engagement with the social infrastructure, indicated by the arrow highlighted in the community strength model depicted Figure 1 (3:3.2).

The proposed model also highlights the role of boundaries within the entrepreneurial social infrastructure (ESI) framework as it relates to RCD. The management of boundaries and agendas within the RCD constituent community and between constituent communities falls within the ESI element of symbolic diversity which encourages managing conflict by *“focusing on (place based) community processes, depersonalisation of politics, and broadening of (place based) community boundaries”* (Flora & Flora, 1993, p. 51). Symbolic diversity is built when (as in the current research model) agendas are identified as the expression of values in connection with constituent community membership and by then focusing on the common values associated with the cause. In this way, these community boundary processes within the rural community can be recognised and depersonalised, enabling the new RCD constituent community to develop a membership amongst

difference, or as Flora & Flora (1993) describe, create more encompassing or permeable community boundaries.

ESI describes the investment of individuals and as a collective in the mobilisation of resources. The current study adds the community boundary details involved, describing how mobilisation is achieved through the establishment of a new RCD constituent community and community ownership. The concepts of alignment, non-alignment and symbolic expression describe the boundary processes involved in building horizontal and vertical ties in the ESI element of developing quality networks to strengthen social capital.

The elements of symbolic diversity and quality networks in ESI are about reducing or removing resistance to the project within the rural community. In this manner, ESI describes the practical steps for building the concept of community support as presented in the current model, while the current model further describes the boundary processes involved in community support and the differences compared to those associated with community ownership.

The RCD community processes model is also relevant to models that outline the stages or phases of community development. For example, in relation to the phases of community action of awareness, organisation, decision, resource mobilization and resource application (Kaufman, 1959; Wilkinson, 1970) the current study has outlined the community boundary processes involved across these steps. The boundary processes occurring during the organisation, control and decision over the action phases, has been described in terms of the development of a new RCD constituent community with the boundary processes associated with establishing the underpinning values, meaning and identity of the cause community in relation to existing constituent communities. The ongoing management of boundary processes then occurs throughout the phases of resource mobilisation and application. The boundary processes associated with community ownership and support can be seen across each of the community action phases.

Another example of how boundary processes similarly relate to the steps of other community development practice frameworks is apparent in relation to the 'building collective capacity' framework (Taylor, et al., 2008). The stage of identifying common ground would involve managing and negotiating boundary processes related to existing agendas and values and establishing those associated with the purpose underpinning the new RCD constituent community identity. It would also involve the boundary processes associated with community ownership. Similarly for the stages of working cooperatively, in partnership and across the community, based on the current study this involves the recognition of existing constituent communities and the values, meaning and identity associated with their boundaries. These boundaries can then be negotiated or managed through alignment, non-alignment, and symbolic expression, which then influence the extent of community support and community ownership.

Looking at other community development models, the proposed community processes modelling of RCD does not challenge the ecological and social justice perspectives within community development literature. The current study is not about how RCD 'should be done' but about describing the boundary dynamics that all participants of RCD in this study (funders, practitioners and rural communities alike) navigated and negotiated in the processes of implementing RCD projects. In this sense, practitioners working from, for example, Ife's (2002) multidimensional and principled framework, can also consider the boundary dynamics presented in the preceding process modelling, as they engage in the facilitative, educational, technical and representational roles of community development in rural communities.

7: 5. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter a model of RCD community processes has been developed and explored. Congruent with existing literature, rural community was presented as a process that involved peoples' experience of the physical and social space, shaping a sense of collective and individual identity and as a source of meaning for people's lives. Based on their aetiology, the study offered

new perspectives on community identifying three types described as feature, interest and cause based communities. It was further found that a multiplicity of communities acted as constituents of each rural community, being part of, yet separate to the rural community. In coexisting, they were constituted by and subject to boundary processes. Literature describes such boundary processes in terms of differentiation and symbolic expression. This study identified additional processes of agendas, alignment and non-alignment. From this foundation a new model was developed providing theoretical insight on RCD and boundary processes. RCD was presented as a process of boundary negotiation to establish a constituent cause community amongst existing constituent communities and the rural community. The often conflated concepts of community ownership and support were also observed to be distinct processes with different roles in how the RCD community interacted with the community fabric. How the processes of boundaries, ownership and support were managed affected both the rural community fabric and the success of projects. The model focuses on the processes of community in RCD and as such is but one aspect to be considered alongside existing community development frameworks.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

The purpose of the research was to generate a theoretical understanding of how RCD implementation interacts with and affects the fabric of rural (place based) communities. Utilising a grounded theory approach, RCD was found to involve establishing a cause community which was subject to, and brought about, community boundary processes as it interacted with and within the rural community. The community process model developed in this thesis offers a potentially significant contribution to further understanding rural community dynamics as they interact with RCD.

8: 1. Implications for Rural Community Development Practice

Applying the RCD community process model can help manage the impact of RCD implementation processes within the fabric of the community. These concepts also provide the opportunity to understand and manage the effect of rural community boundary processes upon project implementation. Discussed in the following are some of the implications for policy and practice that were apparent to the researcher, based on the experience of the current study and previous experience as a practitioner and participant of RCD. Other practitioners and participants may identify other practice implications in response to their own field experience and practice frameworks.

This research indicates the boundary processes in communities and especially between constituent communities, are important in RCD. Although boundaries cannot be drawn and described definitively because they are constantly defined and redefined in response to contact with other community boundaries, modelling community processes provides an avenue for insight into the perpetual process of community change. This insight can be used to understand each rural community and the boundary processes surrounding RCD. The model can help in understanding the environment for a project by highlighting the processes of rural and constituent communities with

which project implementation interacts. It can also be used to understand how boundary processes apply in establishing a constituent cause community to forward project goals.

8: 1.1 Rural community and RCD community boundary processes

As was presented in the discussion chapter, this research adds to a growing body of research and literature which indicates that the clear geographic boundaries identified by residents of rural communities are entangled with the sense of identity and particularly community identity. Similarly, clear physical boundaries also correspond with a greater capacity for ownership and support of RCD projects. The implication is that how community is defined for funding, affects the likely ownership and support offered to projects. At a policy level, it would seem that concepts such as social catchments for determining funding boundaries would enable ownership and support for projects to be more easily established, matching the existing sense of rural community identity. In this manner, policy decisions around defining rural community boundaries can influence how communities engage with RCD projects.

At a practice level, applying community process modelling identifies implications where the community boundaries defined for funding do not match the boundaries associated with the rural community identity expressed by members. In such environments, practitioners engaging communities around RCD projects, need to become key facilitators of negotiating the existing rural community boundaries to develop a new purpose specific sense of rural community identity, around which ownership and the core membership of an 'RCD community' can then be established. In the study communities, this was built on the desire for purposive change.

Assessing the rural community environment also involves applying an understanding of the role of values, meaning and identity in multiple community membership and their expression through the boundary processes of agenda, alignment and symbolic expression. As constituent and rural communities are constantly negotiating boundaries, conflicting constituent community agendas are part of the complex dynamic of the fabric of the community. The research suggests that RCD

participants tend to identify agendas only as pernicious. If, however, they are recognised to be part of maintaining, negotiating or constructing constituent community boundaries, rather than being a subversive influence, they can provide insight into the values of the related constituent communities and the boundaries to be negotiated. In the process of establishing a new RCD constituent community, it is important not to assume agendas are negative influences when arise. By understanding agendas as an expression of meaning and identity associated with the respective constituent community it is possible to depersonalise the differences, thus taking the focus off the individual member, and instead acknowledging and respecting the broader community roles involved.

By further identifying the meaning and values at the core of an agenda, it is possible to shed light on the foundations for community engagement and potential alignment in the RCD processes. For example, values-based conflict between existing constituent communities which affected the RCD process in each of the study communities included: forestry/agriculture and green/alternative constituent community interactions; progressive development and social history; and funding source and community voice. From the perspective on the community processes model, RCD involves engaging membership and support for a new RCD cause community from across these constituent communities whose memberships are frequently in conflict with each other. Where alignments were managed by focusing on the shared values within the RCD concept, community ownership and support were more rapidly engaged. The practice implications for establishing a new RCD constituent community is detailed in 8: 1.2.

In the immediate future it is conceivable that these, or similar dynamics will exist in many rural communities and it may thus be helpful to identify, consider and manage their boundary processes when implementing RCD. However, when considering community as a process there would also be other conflicting agendas, as constituent communities are temporal and unique to each rural

community. By identifying the conflicting agendas existing within rural community processes, it is possible to respond proactively and manage the fit with the values underpinning the project.

To understand how boundary processes might be managed when implementing RCD projects, it is important to identify the constituent communities within the rural community. Further, identifying the associated values provides the foundation for understanding and managing the processes of alignment. This research highlighted that building alignments or establishing and balancing non-alignment in the early stages of RCD processes, was important for engaging community ownership and support in accessing needed skills or resources to attain project goals. Key in engaging ownership and support was not only managing agendas, but also concentrating on values common between a constituent community and the RCD concept, and maintaining a focus on the purpose of the project and its benefits in the rural community. Where these processes were ignored in the early stages of project implementation, attainment of goals was significantly delayed compared to where alignment and non-alignment amongst constituent communities were addressed in the initial weeks of the project implementation.

Similarly, while negotiating agenda and alignment processes, there is benefit in participants understanding symbolic expression in boundary processes, to avoid unnecessary conflict or confusion in community relationships which might negatively impact RCD processes. A pertinent example was that sharing a meal may mean more to community members than just convenience due to the time a meeting was held. It may be a confirmation of community identity and alignment and accompanying such connection could be expectations of support when requested. Recognising the significance in sharing a meal enables respect and a considered response to the significance of its symbolic expression. Similarly, understanding discourses and language associated with various constituent communities supports clear communication. Identifying and understanding the significant expressions of identity may thus facilitate RCD processes. It is important to remember

that these symbolic expressions of collective identity will be specific to each community and cannot be assumed *a priori*.

8: 1.2 RCD cause community establishment

Understanding the various agendas and values of constituent communities across the rural community also provides insight into engaging in the ensuing process of boundary negotiation in the establishment of an RCD constituent cause community. By considering RCD implementation as involving establishing a constituent community of cause engaging in boundary processes, it is possible to identify the dynamics that need to be managed (values, meaning and identity) and the boundaries to be negotiated. Through actively managing these community processes it may be possible to shape their contribution to the project outcomes.

Engaging the community through building early alignments was an important component in progressing RCD projects in the study. This can be achieved more readily where the values and collective identity of the RCD constituent community are also quickly established. Establishing the core values and agendas associated with the 'RCD community' provides a foundation for membership recruitment and in particular the establishment of ownership, by presenting a clear community identity with which people can compare their own values when considering their relationship with the RCD process.

Creating a new RCD community involves negotiating boundaries of difference as practitioners and participants engage with members across varying existing constituent communities. This community engagement inherently involves addressing conflicting or different values. By acknowledging and respecting existing identities and memberships when building the membership of new communities, it was possible to manage conflict within the RCD community and minimise the potential negative impact on participants, the rural community fabric and the projects' progress. Managing this process involves being able to recognise agendas as relating to identity associated with other constituent community membership, and refocus on the purpose and agenda of the new community

and the values common to both. This practice implication is also underpinned by the research findings that constituent communities were defined by their purpose and agendas, not the specific individuals involved. Again, clear purpose, underpinning values and the negotiation of other constituent community values is important in the establishment of an RCD community.

In establishing an RCD constituent community membership, there were four constituent community boundary processes that were demonstrated in this research to be important in balancing alignments for gaining broad rural community representation and equally engagement and support, as well as managing the internal RCD community dynamics in progressing community goals. These were related to the length of connection with the rural community, age, socio economic status (SES), and employment status. By ensuring these constituent communities were represented in the membership of the new RCD constituent community, the project was seen to have validity across each of these memberships, facilitating alignment and thus support. Further, having a balance of members at different life stages was important for accessing skills, as well as having members with time to progress the activities associated with the RCD goals. While it can be argued that these specific boundary processes are likely to have continued relevance for RCD in the current rural environment in Australia, the dynamic nature of communities means different constituent communities will be important to different projects and in different rural communities. An important implication for practice is the identification of the various constituent communities and the boundary processes within the rural community, to understand how they might be managed when establishing the RCD community.

Given the influx of 'new-comers' in rural areas in recent years, participants acknowledged the importance of representing newcomers, not only to acknowledge their role in the rural community and thus begin forging alignments, but also for the new perspectives, skills and ideas that they offered to the RCD process. However this was in balance with engaging with the historic memory and ownership of the rural community offered by long-timers. The depth of knowledge of the rural

community was an important contribution to the project processes, as was forging alignment with the long-time community for broader support. The study findings suggest that these boundary negotiations and related alignments with both long-timer and newcomer constituent communities are particularly important in building continuing community ownership and support in the current environment of rural communities. Thus these boundary tensions are important in RCD outcomes, and the model provides an avenue to better understand and manage these processes.

Age, SES and employment status were found to be similarly important in establishing a cause community that was not only representative of the rural community in responding to the different perspectives and needs, but that also facilitated alignment across these boundaries to in turn establish community support. The research highlights important practice considerations regarding the different boundary management issues associated with each of these feature communities.

Managing RCD constituent community dynamics to encourage the engagement of young people has importance in building skills to sustain ongoing community engagement in RCD. Ensuring broad SES representation, while bringing a broad range of skills and encouraging financial support, means the different associated cultures need to be respected within the RCD constituent community interactions to maintain ownership and support. Further, to retain and build RCD constituent community membership and alignments, the management of the resources of RCD constituent communities needs attention to ensure transparency in this balancing of time and money with different 'SES communities'. Additionally, within the mix of RCD constituent community members with ownership, there needs to be members with time to progress project tasks. This points to engaging and balancing the differing needs of individuals without current employment, and the study particularly highlighted the significance of the mutually beneficial engagement of the retired community in RCD. The retired community not only had time, but were also looking for a cause which would fulfil a need to belong.

While these particular constituent community interactions were identified in the participating communities across a range of projects, other constituent communities are likely to be relevant in different rural communities and with different projects. When implementing an RCD project, the implication of viewing rural communities as process is that it is important to review all the constituent communities associated with the rural community, identify where representation is important for alignment, and identify the values to be negotiated in that process. Managing these boundary processes is integral to community engagement, as it supports not only the establishment of the RCD cause community and ownership to progress activities, but is also associated with the early development of alignments to build the community support needed for skills and resources.

Recognising the elements of community ownership was important in being able to establish an RCD constituent cause community. Ownership involved core local members identifying with the values underpinning the project concept, seeing its benefit to the rural community and further, embracing the responsibility for the associated tasks. The study highlighted that it is important to distinguish between community support which may include completing requested tasks, compared to ownership which identifies the tasks and drives their allocation and completion. Where this distinction was not made, work was not progressed on establishing an RCD constituent community as there was a belief that community ownership existed. However, with only local community support not local ownership, the project failed to progress when outside participants were no longer available to drive the process. Therefore, understanding the different function and roles of ownership and support identified in this study has important practice implications.

In establishing an RCD constituent cause community, the findings suggest it is also valuable to recognise the importance of community support in reducing resistance. In a field where some people are fatigued from their input into active community participation, engaging them in less active membership through a range of community support options is still a valid and important role. Community support can facilitate momentum in the overall RCD constituent community, and is

particularly motivating for those who have taken on ownership of the project concepts and tasks. It is important to manage community support to reduce resistance and provide encouragement.

Understanding the boundary processes of agendas and alignments, and the interactive relationship, has the potential to provide insight into the establishment of an RCD community. Acknowledging and respecting existing identity, membership and associated agendas when creating the new RCD community can minimise conflict and its impact on the fabric of the rural community, individuals and the project, as well increase engagement in the project. Managing these boundary processes also strengthens the capacity for building ownership and support. While ownership takes responsibility and directly tackles the tasks associated with a project, support is equally important in accessing skills, resources and in building momentum within the RCD community, yet is less demanding and thus more accessible where people have limited time and energy.

8: 2. Strengths and Limitations

The research has generated theoretical insights regarding community processes within the context of RCD. These were drawn from the ground of peoples' experience in a manner that means the findings have the potential to be translated to other settings. The development of this theory also raised questions not answered in the study. Further research would strengthen both the capacity for extrapolation and detail how the findings interact with other community concepts.

8: 2.1 Strengths and limits of extrapolation

As a grounded theory research project, there was sufficient material to generate theory from the interview data, contextualised by newspaper articles, videos, documents and email communication relating to the projects, and the experience of the time spent by the researcher with community members. However, it has been argued that *"Rural community development is far too complex to be adequately captured by the use of only one variable or measure and/or by one method of gathering data."* (Luloff, 1999, p. 314). While additional data may have fine-tuned the theory which emerged,

it is unlikely that the central processes identified would have been brought into question. These were strongly evidenced within the data sourced from different environments. Therefore although further triangulation was preferred, given resource constraints, additional data sources were not used in this initial work. Taking a perspective that *“the quality of a theory is determined by its ability to explain new data”* (Borgatti, 2005, p. 1), while the emergent theory explains the data sample, future research would further establish its theoretical robustness and the extent of its capacity for extrapolation across rural communities in general, and community development in other place based communities. Additional research could also utilise methods that ideally would have been included in the current study, such as a structured coding of documents and extended observations in the field, or focus groups to reflect on the initial theory development.

Theoretical sampling until saturation of concepts was achieved at a point when one targeted project had only three interviews and thus a sweep of stakeholders was not achieved in one project.

Contextual data for this project was rich in project documents, media coverage, regional history and demographic data and observation. While care would be needed if extrapolating from an individual project, the interactive processes were the focus of the research, not the case in its self and these boundary processes were consistently evidenced across and within all transcripts. The participants from this site were relevant stakeholders in the process of RCD implementation and thus an equally valuable contribution to the overall sample. Identifying theoretical insights regarding the central community processes was possible as across the data the range of RCD stakeholders relevant to the research question were represented, and many participants spoke of more than one project experience, further enriching the data. With the value of hindsight, it would have been more thorough to monitor that the stakeholders were represented not just across the entire sample, but also within each site.

Due to the rich quality of the data, the overall sample size was also relatively small when saturation of theoretical concepts was achieved. As key stakeholder groups were represented, theoretical

inferences were possible, however the limited size of the sample does not permit generalisation without further testing. Thus while the study sample and methodology enabled the development of initial theory, due to the limited scope of the study and sample size further research is needed to test whether the theoretical model explains data from other samples. This would help to determine the extent to which the theory can be extrapolated, as well as potentially fine tune the key theoretical concepts of the emergent RCD community processes model.

The theory developed from the data encompasses the multiple and complex understandings of community and thus has the potential to be relevant across not only the varying compositions and dynamics of rural community and RCD, but also to forms of community and community development in non-rural environments. A focus on processes enables the capacity to explore the community processes of community development despite the potential differences of environment including resources, the strength of collective identity associated with the place based community and tightness of social networks. As communities are identifiable through boundary processes and communities within communities have been acknowledged in a range of environments, the urban environment is also highly likely to involve constituent communities and the processes of alignment, agendas, and symbolic expression all accentuated in the processes of community development. It is conceivable that community development processes would thus include establishing a community development cause community and the related boundary processes. The extent to which the current research can be extrapolated to urban communities, would become clear through further research.

Data collection occurred within two states of Australia in rural communities that were relatively ethnically homogeneous. Further, the background reading and literature had a predominantly UK, USA, Australian, Canadian and NZ focus, yet the limited inclusion of African and Asian sources did not offer anything to counteract the relevance of boundary processes within these settings. Again, the capacity for extrapolation of the theory to different cultural settings would need to be tested.

Through engaging with community as processes, the conceptualisation of community is sufficiently complex that there is the potential for the theoretical insights developed within the study to be relevant across different approaches and frameworks of community work. For example, regardless of whether projects are based on contributions, instrumental, developmental or community empowerment approaches as described by Taylor et al (2008), participants are involved in negotiating constituent community boundaries. Thus through understanding the boundary processes identified in the research, participants (including practitioners) can be further informed in managing the community dynamics surrounding projects. Similarly, while the preceding chapters have pointed to how the current research offers additional insight in the community strength model of community development, understanding community boundary processes has relevance across a broad range of community development frameworks found in the literature, which provide guiding steps and stages in project implementation.

This thesis thus has potential utility for community development across place based communities in Western and possibly other nations. Likewise, a further strength is its potential utility for practitioners of community development from a range of disciplines, approaches and frameworks. However, the limitations of the study sample mean that the theoretical inferences need further testing before generalisations can be made. Further research is needed to determine the extent to which the theory can be extrapolated.

8: 2.2 Theoretical questions for further research

As the RCD community processes model emerged, other community concepts were highlighted as interacting with the identified processes. These were considered within the limits of the study and are flagged in the following as areas for further research.

While the thesis offers foundational insights into community processes in RCD, there are gaps in the details of how these interact with other potentially influencing variables such as identity and sense of belonging. Based on the literature, the entanglement of identity, belonging and community was

assumed within the current modelling. However, research aimed at a more detailed understanding of the interactive role of belonging, and collective and individual identity with the identified boundary processes, would strengthen the theory through better understanding their relationship within the proposed model. Similarly, some of the boundary processes between the 'RCD community' and funding sources flagged the role and significance of power. The interrelationship of power and RCD boundary processes has not been explored in the current study and has been identified as a relevant further consideration for the model.

The frequency of multiple memberships across constituent community boundaries highlighted the potential relevance of boundary crosser/spanner literature to the RCD community processes model. Likewise, the current study also flags a potential role of agenda and alignment boundary processes in understanding boundary crossing processes. As the current model identifies boundary processes which have been highlighted by RCD, it is possible that these same processes occur in boundary crossing amongst communities in organisational or professional settings. Further research would enrich knowledge regarding these relationships.

The processes of ownership and support identified within RCD cause communities raises a range of questions which would need further research. While these elements are conceivably relevant to other cause communities, this was not covered in the current study. It is also not clear whether and how these processes relate to interest and feature communities. The current thesis has begun to detail the function and roles of community ownership and support in RCD boundary processes, but has not explored their role in relation to the concepts of community satisfaction and community participation. Additionally, common values were apparent across the RCD cause communities but the data did not reveal whether these are important in defining RCD communities from other cause communities or from other constituent communities in general.

From a community psychology perspective the theory may be refined through exploring whether there are measurable components of identity and sense of community in constituent communities.

It may be useful to understand if sense of community within constituent communities is a quantifiable construct in the same manner as the Psychological Sense of Community Scale which while predominantly applied to place based communities has also been utilised in work community environments and described as relevant in relational and organization settings (Burroughs & Eby, 1998; Mannarini & Fedi, 2009; Puddifoot, 1996).

In summary, the study has generated theoretical insights regarding the function, role and effect of community processes within the context of RCD. These insights have been shown to have useful applications, which have the potential for extrapolation. It has also led to more questions. Having identified and described foundational RCD processes regarding constituent communities, agendas, alignments, and symbolic expression, further detail regarding the function of the interaction of these boundary processes with important variables identified throughout the study (for example, individual and collective identity, belonging, power, community participation and satisfaction, and sense of community) would strengthen the model and increase its utility. Questions arise regarding whether the processes of ownership and support also relate to feature and interest communities, and whether or not the values identified as common across RCD communities are useful in distinguishing them from other cause communities. Overall, further research is needed to test the ability of the theory to explain data beyond the rural context, beyond a 'western' cultural environment and beyond rural and community development to other areas where community processes are important, such as boundary crossing.

8: 3. Conclusion

The purpose of the research has been achieved in identifying community boundary processes, the manner in which they interact with RCD and in turn how this interaction affects the fabric of the rural community. A theoretical model has emerged that will need testing to determine its theoretical robustness. The current research is potentially useful not only for rural communities, but the range of disciplines engaged in the variety of approaches, methods and techniques that are RCD.

Likewise, it is potentially useful for government and non-government organisations across many cultures and countries, as they seek the benefits of RCD approaches in addressing the challenges faced by rural communities.

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Appendix 1: Interview prompts

Question	Prompts
Tell me about how this project came about	Who why how..... initial ideas / activity initial implementation
Tell me about your involvement in the project.	professional interest personal interest expectations, hope & desires
Tell me about how the project has reached this point.	how developed changes responsibilities membership driving forces difficulties / challenges / barriers
Tell me about the critical points along the way	turning points subtleties positive negative crisis how managed
What have you learnt from this?	liked disliked do different? do again? about people about relationships about community about rcd processes about project management
Impact Questions	Prompts
How have you been involved in the project?	role
What was your experience of the project?	Info from as early as possible Highs, lows, Feelings Thoughts
Do you think the project has gone how the community wants?	Why Community reaction Community expectations Level of Community engagement? Beliefs about community
Do you think the project is what the community needs?	Why What needed? How differ What feasible Beliefs about community
Has the project had an effect on how people get along in the community	What effect How people feel about the community? How stakeholder groups relate to each other Why?

Appendix 2: Sample introductory email for agency contact

Dear *Agency Contact*

I am approaching you to see if your agency is willing to assist in enrolling a project or program to participate in some research about rural community development processes. This may be a project run solely by your agency, as a partnership or auspiced by your agency.

The purpose of this research is to explore and better understand how rural community development is played out and how this affects community. I am particularly interested in the complex relationships within rural community development. The study seeks to interview or survey all those who have been involved in the planning or implementation of the rural community development project. By participating in the study, you will be helping to add to the understanding of rural community development practice which may in turn improve its practice. I am undertaking the study to fulfil the requirements of a PhD degree.

Criteria for Project or program suitability.

1. It can be considered community development in that it enhances quality of life
2. It can be considered rural. While preference is given to areas beyond Tasmania's cities, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie are nationally classified as rural, so I would be interested in discussing suitability of such possibilities.
3. I am keen to cover projects at various stages of development including initial conception, development, implementation and ongoing operation.

Process involved

If you are interested in your agency being involved, to meet ethical standards your agency would need to contact the program and its stakeholders inviting them to contact me directly and provide an information sheet and covering letter (which I have already developed and which has received ethical approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network).

Interviews

I am seeking to interview representatives of stakeholders in the project. Stakeholders include those involved and interested in the development eg agency staff, funding body representatives, other partners, community representatives and service recipients. Interviews are expected to last about an hour and reflect on the process of the project, the experience and the impact of the process upon those involved, and the broader community. (See appended interview schedule.) Interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed. Participants will be asked sign a consent form and will be given copy of this with the information sheet.

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and participants may withdraw themselves and or their data at any stage before the data is blended into the study. There is no remuneration or other rewards being offered to any participants. There are no perceived risks associated with participating in the research activity.

All identifiable data will only be seen by the research team and every step will be taken to ensure the researchers will not disclose the data in an identifiable form. Audiotapes and interview transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and/or on password protected computer files at the University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania at the Anne O'Byrne Centre. Identities will be coded and the coding key will not be accessible beyond the research team. In line with the NHMRC Guidelines, these will be kept for five years from the completion of the study, after which they will be destroyed. Every step will be taken to ensure that your agency cannot be identified in any published material.

If you have any queries or concerns about the research, please do not hesitate to contact me via the details below. Alternatively you could contact my supervisors (see details below). If you are interested I can provide a more detailed rationale for the research.

PhD Candidate

Heather Brookes
University Department of Rural Health
University of Tasmania
Locked Bag 1372
Launceston Tas 7250
Phone 03 6324 4002
Fax 03 6324 4040
Email Heather.Brookes@utas.edu.au

Principal Supervisor

Dr Peter Orpin
Senior Research Fellow
University Department of Rural Health,
Tasmania
Private Bag 103
Hobart 7001
Phone 03 6226 6344
Fax 03 6231 6601
Email Peter.Orpin@utas.edu.au

Co-Supervisor

Dr Rosalind Bull
Deputy Director
Graduate Research Coordinator
University Department of Rural Health
University of Tasmania
Locked Bag 1372
Launceston, Tas, 7250
Phone 03-6324 4016
Fax. 03 6324 4040
Email Rosalind.Bull@utas.edu.au

Ethical considerations

The research has received ethical approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network which is constituted under the National Health and Medical Research Council and utilises the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* Guidelines to inform their decisions.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network. The Executive Officer can direct you to the relevant Chair of the committee that reviewed the research.

Executive Officer: Amanda McAully 03 6226 2763

If you are interested in your agency being involved in this research, please contact me to make further arrangements. An Executive Summary of this will also be available to those who request it.

Regards
Heather

Heather Brookes

PhD Candidate
University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania,
University of Tasmania
Locked Bag 1372
Launceston Tasmania 7250
Ph: +61 (0)3 6324 4002
Fax: (03) 6324 4040
Email: Heather.Brookes@utas.edu.au
Web site: www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au

Appendix 3: Sample introductory email for potential participants

Date

Dear

We would like to invite you on behalf of Heather Brookes, a PhD student at the University of Tasmania, to participate in a study on community development. Heather's study seeks to increase our understanding of the complex relationships within community development in order to improve our practice in this area. You have been invited to participate because the project in which you are involved is ideally suited to Heather's study.

Please find attached an information sheet detailing the purpose of the research, what participating involves, and who to contact if you have any questions or concerns.

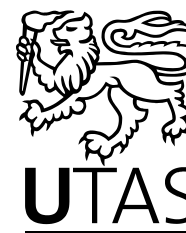
As detailed on the enclosed sheet, the study is being run to ethical standards, and is completely voluntary. All identifiable data will only be seen by the research team and every step will be taken to ensure the researchers will not disclose the data in an identifiable form.

Thank you for your time in considering participating in this study. If you are interested in participating in an interview, please contact Heather directly by phone on 63244002 or email Heather.Brookes@utas.edu.au .

Yours sincerely

Appendix 4: Sample information sheet

Locked Bag 1372 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: (03) 6324 4000 Fax: (03) 6324 4040
Email: rural.health@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/ruralhealth



UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RURAL HEALTH

Information Sheet

Date: 24th April 2006

Title of Investigation

Rural Community Development: discourses, influences, processes and their impact on community members.

Chief Investigator

Dr Peter Orpin

Associate Investigators

Dr Rosalind Bull

Heather Brookes

The purpose of this research is to explore and better understand how rural community development is played out and how this affects community. The study seeks to interview those who have been involved in the planning or implementation of the rural community development project. By participating in the study, you will be helping to add to the understanding of rural community development practice which may in turn improve its practice. The study is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements for a PhD degree by Heather Brookes and as such she will be the person in direct contact with participants.

What participation in this study involves

Interviews

We are seeking to interview representatives of stakeholders in the project. These interviews are expected to last about an hour and allow you to reflect on the process of the project, your experience and the impact of the process upon you, others involved, and the broader community. Interviews will be held at a negotiated location. With your permission the interview will be audio taped and subsequently transcribed. You will be asked sign a consent form. You will be given copy of this signed consent form to keep with this information sheet.

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw yourself and, in the case of interviews, your data at any stage before the data is blended into the study. There is no remuneration or other rewards being offered to any of the participants. There are no perceived risks associated with participating in the research activity.

All identifiable data will only be seen by the research team and every step will be taken to ensure the researchers will not disclose the data in an identifiable form. Audiotapes and interview transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and/or on password protected computer files at the University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania at the Anne O'Byrne Centre. Identities will be coded and the coding key will not be accessible beyond the research team. In line with the NHMRC Guidelines, these will be kept for five years from the completion of the study, after which they will be destroyed.

Who can I contact?

If you have any concerns or questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact one of the following:

Principal Supervisor

Dr Peter Orpin
Senior Research Fellow
University Department of Rural Health,
Tasmania
Private Bag 103
Hobart Tas 7001
Phone 03 6226 6344
Fax 03 6231 6601
Email Peter.Orpin@utas.edu.au

Co-Supervisor

Dr Rosalind Bull
Deputy Director
Graduate Research Coordinator
University Department of Rural Health
University of Tasmania
Locked Bag 1372
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Phone 03-6324 4016
Fax. 03 6324 4040
Email Rosalind.Bull@utas.edu.au

PhD Candidate

Heather Brookes
University Department of Rural Health
University of Tasmania
Locked Bag 1372
Launceston Tas 7250
Phone 03 6324 4002
Fax 03 6324 4040
Email Heather.Brookes@utas.edu.au

Ethical considerations

This research has received ethical approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network which is constituted under the National Health and Medical Research Council and utilises the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* Guidelines to inform their decisions.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network. The Executive Officer can direct you to the relevant Chair of the committee that review the research.

Executive Officer: Amanda McAully 03 6226 2763

Result of the research

You may also wish to view the final thesis, which will be available through the University of Tasmania Library upon completion of the research. An Executive Summary of this will also be available to those who request it.

Dr Peter Orpin
Chief Investigator

Dr Rosalind Bull
Associate Investigator

Heather Brookes
Associate Investigator

Appendix 5: Sample consent form

Locked Bag 1372 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: (03) 6324 4000 Fax: (03) 6324 4040
Email: rural.health@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/ruralhealth

Locked Bag 1372 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: (03) 6324 4000 Fax: (03) 6324 4040
Email: rural.health@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/ruralhealth

UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RURAL HEALTH

UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RURAL HEALTH

Consent Form

16 October 2013

Rural Community Development: discourses, influences, processes and their impact on community members.

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that participation in the study involves one or more of the following procedures:
 - Participation in an audio-taped and transcribed semi-structured interview of about one-hour on my experience of the project process
 - and an audio-taped and transcribed follow-up interview about a year after the first interview
4. I understand that no risks are anticipated with participation in this study.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for a period of 5 years at the end of which the data will be destroyed.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.
8. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and may request the withdrawal of data I have supplied at any time prior to the data being blended into the study.

Name of participant _____

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Statement by Investigator

- ☐ I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

- ☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet in which my details have been provided so that participants have had opportunity to contact me prior to them consenting to participate in this project.

Name of investigator _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix 6: Ethics Approval

Ethics Application Approved: H8714 Rural community development: Discourses, influences, processes and their impact on community members.

Marilyn Knott [Marilyn.Knott@utas.edu.au]

To: Peter Orpin

Cc: Rosalind Bull; Heather J. Brookes

Wednesday, 8 February 2006 1:01 PM

Dear Dr Orpin

Ethics Ref No: H8714

Project title: Rural community development: Discourses, influences, processes and their impact on community members.

This Ethics Minimal Risk application has been approved.

A signed copy of the formal approval letter will be sent to the Chief Investigator/Supervisor by mail in the next few days.

The Committee wish you all the best with the project.

Kind regards

Marilyn Knott

--

Marilyn Knott
Ethics Officer - Social Sciences
Office of Research Services
University of Tasmania
Private Bag 01
Hobart TAS 7001
Phone: (03) 6226 2764
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Appendix 7: Sample breakdown

Employment		Age group		CD past		Highest formal education		Gender		Length of time in rural community	
Employed private sector	4	20's	1	No previous experience	8	Primary	1	Male	14	Entire life	3
Employed public sector	6	30's	5			High	3			>30 years	2
Employed community sector	5	40's	8	Previous experience	11	Matric	4			20<30 yrs	1
Self employed blue collar	4	50's	7			Trade	1			15<20 yrs	2
								5<10 yrs	3		
Retired	1	60's	2	CD practitioner	2	Diploma	4	Female	7	1<5 years	3
										<12 months	1
Homemaker	1	70's	1			Tertiary	8			Live outside work inside	4

Table 6: Number of participants by demographic qualifiers